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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 584. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 10TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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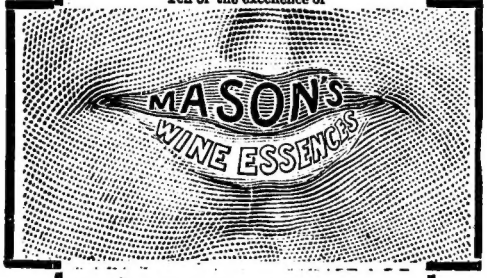

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

No. 584.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending March 10th, 1900.

TWO MEN AND MARGARET.

THE sole bachelor in Waveny was ill. The full importance of this fact could only be understood by one who had dwelt in Waveny, for the little mountain town with its environment of deserted copper mines was one of the "has beens" of Queensland. Sons and brothers left it early to seek work beyond the western ranges, so that Waveny was a feminine stronghold, with a few staid fathers, and a cadet corps of little boys to vary the monotony.

The clergyman was a widower, certainly, but a misanthrope, and had been known to return gifts of slippers and comforters—therefore, when Billy Heron set up as mining agent and stockbroker, bringing with him satisfactory letters of introduction and an unlimited capacity for the enjoyment of afternoon teas, and the society of girls, Waveny awoke to new life.

Billy was not handsome, being over six feet, and not broad in proportion. His features were large and roughly hewn, but he had a quick smile, white even teeth, and a thick crop of chestnut hair, which waved Byronically from his forehead.

His inherent appreciation of womenkind individually, and in the abstract, ensured his position amongst them from the first, and he was adept enough in all manly sports to gain the approval of the fathers and brothers; in fact, it was to the training of a horse for the Werrimu amateur races that he owed his present illness—a sprained

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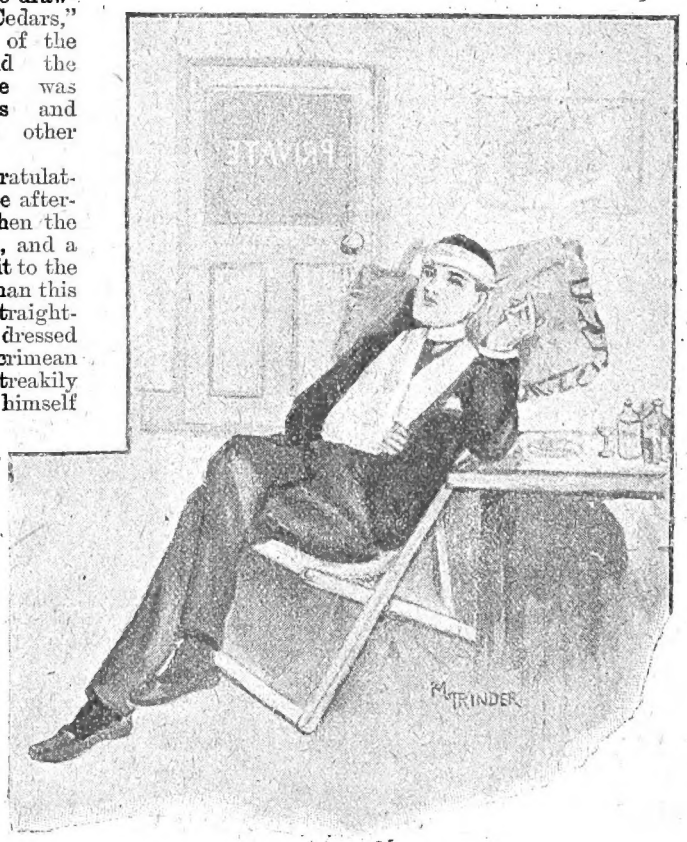
wrist, scratched face, and feverish cold, which combined to keep him to the little back parlour of his office, and the tender ministrations of the Irish servant, who brought over his dinner from the neighbouring hotel, and the little Gulf blackboy who cleaned his boots, attended to his horse, and was generally useful. At least he was apparently left to their ministrations; in reality half the girls in Waveny society were burning their faces over "invalid cookery," and the small brothers were continually running messages and carrying baskets to the office.

One warm summer's afternoon he was lying back in a canvas chair, propped up by Liberty-silk cushions. The cushions came from the drawing-room of the "Cedars," which was the home of the principal lawyer, and the oilcloth-covered table was crowded with bottles and baskets of fruit and other dainties.

He was inwardly congratulating himself on the free afternoon he was having when the office door swung open, and a visitor walked through it to the inner room. It was a man this time—a brown-faced, straight-limbed young bushman, dressed in moleskins and a crimean shirt, cleanly, but streakily washed—probably by himself in some grass-bordered, limestone creek along the track. His hat, boots, and gaiters were the worse for wear—the boots especially proclaimed the fact that he had travelled a long way on foot—as in truth he had, for his horse had died beyond Bourke during the heat wave, and work had not been plentiful along the route. There was a bright look of expectation on his face as he advanced towards Heron; the latter half rose, looking inquiringly at him.



One warm summer's afternoon he was lying back in a canvas chair.

"I'm Charlie Cliffe—but I don't expect you to know me in this rig-out."

Charlie Cliffe! In Heron's mind's eye rose the blue waters and melancholy sweep of scrub-clad cliffs of Port Jackson. He heard again the ripple of waves against the sides of the man-of-war, and the plash of trained oars as the boats brought their loads of gay society people from the jetty. For it was at an "afternoon" on *H.M.S. Orlando* that he had last seen Charlie Cliffe, the spruce young Englishman, who, as orphan, nephew and adopted son of Miles Fordham, one of Sydney's wealthiest merchants, had been welcomed by its society with open arms.

"Charlie Cliffe—great Scott! old man, I should rather think I wouldn't know you—come in and sit down—well, this beats creation—left hand please, right's incapable."

"An accident? By Jove, you have been knocked about!"

"Yes, a spill; training a mare for the Werrimu Amateur. But what brought you to this part of the world; when last we met it was at a spree on the *Orlando*. High old times you were having too."

Cliffe smiled a little sadly.

"I've known what it is to rough it since then," he said. "Uncle Miles cut up rough because I wouldn't marry to please him; a business arrangement between himself and the girl's father, and neither of the interested parties 'on.' Consequently we had a row, and I cleared out to shift for myself in the bush. Took a run to the goldfields first—can't say I made a fortune—and then became a 'sundowner,' looking for jobs. I was glad enough to work for tucker sometimes. Sometimes neither tucker nor work was on the carpet, and, well, here I am."

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," said Heron. "I'm jolly glad to see you anyhow. (Here Jacky, you black imp! bring in some glasses, and be quick about it.) And where are you bound for now?"

"Sydney. Read that!" And he handed Heron a slip of paper. It was a newspaper cutting from the "Missing Friends" column, and informed Charles Standish Cliffe that if he would return to M. F. bygones should be bygones and ample restitution would be made.

"I picked that up with some scraps on a deserted cattle camp, and I made south on the strength of it. Waveny is the first railway station I have come to. Of course I could have gone by Hendra but I heard you were here, and I have come to borrow a fiver to take me down at once, so that I can see how the land lies—that is, if you think the security good enough. The old man may still wish to work his own plans, counting on the hard life to have broken me in, in which case I shall clear out again. If not, he will probably take me into the firm as he intended doing."

"Draw on me for what you like. Fordham isn't the one to take half measures; he was always fond of you;

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but you can't get a train until mid-day to-morrow. You must have a shake-down here."

"Thanks, no. I will go back to my camp to-night, but will see you in the morning and have a yarn over old times."

"Just as you like. I want to hear all you have been doing of late. As for me, things have panned out fairly well. I have got on to some fair things in mines, and the place isn't too bad—fine climate, whips of pretty girls, but wants other fellows to make things hum. By-the-way, an old friend of yours is staying here with Stephens, the lawyer. I suppose you have not forgotten Margaret Revel?"

"No, I have not forgotten her."

Cliffe's tones were even and studied, and Heron looked earnestly at the wall as he continued:

"You were talking to her when I said good-bye to you in Sydney. She had a white dress on, and a black hat, with feathers; and I thought what a well-matched pair you were. You were great friends, I think?"

"Yes, great friends, but so she was with half-a-dozen others. I expected to hear she was married long ago, or engaged at any rate."

"Not to my knowledge, and she does not seem to flirt now. Well, I always thought there was something between you two."

"I suppose I had my dreams," said Cliffe, quietly; "but the catastrophe came so soon after you left, and I had to forget them."

Heron looked thoughtful, and was about to reply when the outer door swung open, and a heavy step and a rustle of silk betokened a fresh visitor.

He looked at the clock despairingly.

"They'll begin to come in shoals, now," he said, "and goodness only knows when they will stop. Oh! come in, Mrs. Stephens. This is good of you. May I introduce my old friend, Charlie Cliffe. Awfully kind of you to take so much trouble."

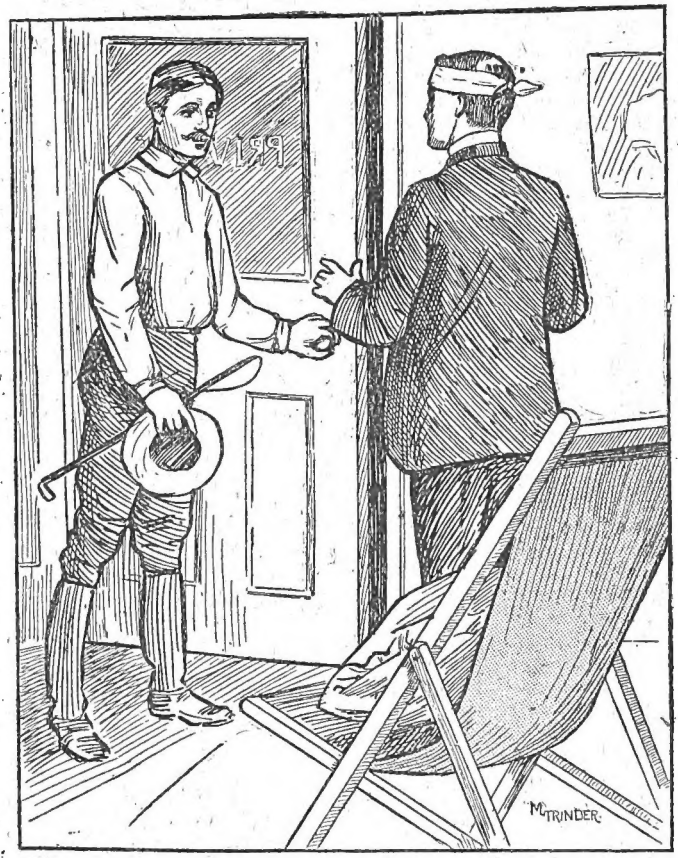
Mrs. Stephens was a large lady; she bowed stiffly to Cliffe, and deposited a basket on the table.

"How are you?" she said. "Minnie will be here directly. The dear child is all nerves; she has been quite upset since she heard Dr. Lee pronounce your symptoms to be feverish. She is bringing some black currant cordial—it is remarkably good; and how did you like the jelly? Poor Minnie was afraid it had too much flavouring in it."

The advent of Miss Minnie, in a picturesquely frilled sun-bonnet, print frock, and innocently "tucked pinafore," created a slight disturbance. She brought the cordial in a jug, and Heron shuddered as he glanced into its dismal depths. Minnie was a plump rabbit-faced little thing, with big blue eyes, and a quantity of dull black hair, and she could only look adoringly at the invalid while her stately and ample-waisted mother moved round the room inspecting the "offerings at the shrine."

Heron skilfully threw a cushion over the French novel lent him by the summer boarder—a certain Miss Smith—at Cray's Hotel, and listened deferentially to Mrs. Stephens's remarks.

"H'm—this is a Priory basket. Peaches in it, and windfalls, too, if I know anything about fruit. Easy enough to pick up a few peaches, but I'd like to see those Wycherley girls cooking for an invalid. Mrs. Rose—she is my washerwoman—lives quite close to them, and tells me the waste at that house is terrible. I really couldn't tell you—" But what Mrs. Stephens couldn't tell for once was not known, for she glanced out of the window, and became as red as a turkeycock.



Cliffe again refused the offer of a shakedown.

"There's that Miss Smith—actually coming in at your back gate. That girl seems to dispense with a chaperon altogether."

Heron jumped up, and called Jacky to open the door and Miss Smith sailed in. She was a stylishly dressed person, of uncertain age and beauty, but had fine eyes and a good figure. She bowed coldly to the Stephenses, who had not called upon her, and smiled ravishingly at the two men, and then walked to the table.

"I've brought the lotion I promised you," she said, "and I'm going to rub it in on the poor face."

She had very white hands, much beringed, and she untied the bottle slowly.

"Very good of you, Miss Smith," said Heron, inwardly thanking his stars that the application was external this time.

"Minnie," said Mrs. Stephens, sternly, "pour out a glass of the cordial. It should be taken while it is hot."

Heron looked miserable. He was under many obligations to the lawyer's family, and could not afford to offend them. Still, the mixture looked horrible.

"My throat is A 1, to-day," he began, but Mrs. Stephens was adamant.

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Minnie poured out a glassful, and Heron took the dose manfully, in spite of the fact that it was as evil-tasting as it looked.

Cliffe turned to assist Miss Smith and to hide his merriment. She was soaking a bandage in the lotion, and, taking it out, she proceeded to untie the handkerchief which bound up Heron's damaged forehead. She lingered over the task caressingly, with her deft, white hands.

"Minnie, come here at once."

The matron's words were few, but her tones said a thousand things.

"We will call again when you are disengaged," she added.

"Oh, pray don't move, Mr. Heron. We should be sorry to disturb such a charming picture," and she swept past with a rustle of silk and buckram, while timid Minnie gave one adoring backward glance—(for with her "the king could do no wrong,")—and whispered, "Take it every two hours—for my sake."

Heron returned that adoring glance with interest. With his nature he could no more have helped doing so than he could have flown.

Miss Smith smiled.

"Guess the old lady don't like me," she said. "You have offended her this time. Ah, Billy, it's all your own fault. You should not flirt with every girl in a small town like this. They are bound to compare notes some day; clever as you are, it can't last."

Heron gave her a quick, tender glance, and touched one of her beautiful hands with his own "sound" one.

"You know I do not flirt," he said softly. The lotion was really soothing, and Miss Smith looked remarkably well in the subdued light. Still he was glad that the operation was finished when the three laughing handsome Wycherley girls from the Priory came in, bringing with them a breezy sense of life and health. Tenderly sympathetic they were, but, having the sense to see that the patient was really tired, they did not stay long after the exit of Miss Smith. They were polite to Cliffe, but the real interest was in Heron. They fluttered about like a flock of white doves, and arranged their offerings of baby roses and violets in a bowl, and then they floated out again.

The men watched them cross the sunlit street to where a fourth girl was standing, apparently waiting for them. She was tall and slight, and had a lot of bronze-gold hair that looked like a halo against the sunlight, and they heard Grace Wycherley call out merrily:

"Hope we did not keep you waiting very long, Queen Margaret."

Both men watched the group until it melted away into the green shadow of the trees round the flower-set square and then Cliffe broke the silence.

"Miss Revel looks well," he said. "Do you expect her here at all?"

"No. She has not been to see me since I was laid up, although she is staying with the Stephenses. I don't think Miss Revel cares a red cent whether I live or die!" And he flung back to his chair, limping badly as he went. He was only human, and the continued spoiling was having its effect, though he would have scorned the insinuation. Miss Revel was still an unconquered citadel of indifference, and it piqued him. Besides that, he had other memories of her, and she had flirted lightly with the bright young fellow when he was amongst a score of admirers who helped to make her "coming out" year so delightful. No doubt the effect of being in the same house with poor Minnie—reduced to a state of partial idiocy by her hopeless absorbing passion—disinclined her more than ever to join the army of devotees, and she could always hear the daily bulletin from them.

Cliffe again refused the offer of a shake down. "I feel queer myself," he said—"quite a new sensation, as I've been as strong as a horse through everything. It's a well known fact that bushmen always get a cold when they first sleep indoors after camping out, and I don't want to make the one that's trying to grip me a certainty. I'll see you to-morrow, old man," and so the two friends parted.

Cliffe turned down the main street, and was crossing the corner by Craig's Hotel, when he came face to face with Margaret Revel. She started and half turned towards him. Whether her pretty frock, neatly gloved hands, and well shod feet made him doubly conscious of his own weather-beaten, shabby turn-out, I cannot say. The slip of paper in his pocket meant in all probability that he was as well off now as in the old Sydney days, but the hardship and roughness of his life during the last two years seemed the only reality; all else a dream.

In a few moments Jacky was escorting the prettiest girl in Waveny to the gap scrub.

And during those years he had striven to forget Margaret's face, and it was like the re-opening of a wound to come across her so suddenly again. Whatever it was he did not answer her look of inquiry, but passed on. There were other bushmen in a group round the bar door, and he easily mingled with them.

There was little to distinguish him from the shearers and teamsters lounging there, and Margaret wondered what had made her so suddenly think of the band playing a waltz by

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Strauss, the white deck, and the blue waters of the harbour, that were not brighter or bluer than the eyes that were looking into her own.

Cliffe walked on like a man in a dream. "I must see Uncle Fordham first," he thought; "it may not be as right as it seems."

The bright sun had disappeared in a misty mountain rain, and a cold wind swept round the shoulder of Mount Craven as he reached his camp at the Gap. He thought of Heron's comfortable room, and regretted not having accepted his hospitality. Salt junk and stale damper is not a tempting supper for a man with a bad headache and darting pains in his limbs, and Cliffe took very little time over his meal before turning in.

A hungry dingo howled weirdly in the scrubs to the left, and the curlews called from the swamp.

In spite of the cold rain Charlie felt feverish and hot, and tossed restlessly from side to side. He thought of Heron's eyes, when Margaret Revel passed, and he remembered how fascinating a man "Billy," was considered in the old Sydney days. The very fact of the girl keeping away so persistently might mean that she was interested in, and self-conscious about him, and so on, and so was torturing himself with jealous doubts as men in the throes of an absorbing passion are apt to do; and thus, the night wore away.

He made a great effort and struggled to his feet, then staggered, and pitched forward.

Meanwhile, away over in Waveny the "other" man was in a seventh heaven of delight, for Miss Revel had paid him a visit at last, accompanied by Mrs. Stephens, Minnie, and the lawyer himself, who though willing to join in the family worship of the interesting invalid, sighed pathetically for his easy chair and paper at home.

Miss Revel had not been pressed to come.

Mrs. Stephens knew that Minnie did not look well beside this bright-haired Sydney girl; but as she declared that she wanted a walk, did not mind wet feet, and thought she really ought to inquire in person as to Mr. Heron's health, and skilfully combated all other objections, they were obliged to take her.

Heron felt terribly conscious of his unshaven chin, and blamed Jacky under his breath for not having tidied up a bit, and as Miss Revel inspected his various ornaments wished fervently that some of the photos of well-known actresses were not quite so pronounced.

Minnie was happy in being able to gaze at the object of her affections, and in seeing that the black currant mixture was half gone, and Mrs. and Mr. Stephens were engaged in an animated discussion, because the latter had said that Miss Smith had fine eyes. Margaret demanded a circumstantial account of the accident, and skilfully brought the conversation round to his day's visitors.

"Minnie mentioned a Mr. Cliffe," she said. "Any relation to the one—I think his name was Charlie—whom we used to meet sometimes at your father's house?"

"The same," answered Heron, trying to conquer his wish to change the subject. "Had a row with old Miles, and cleared out to try and keep himself. He is making for Sydney again now, and I hope things will pan out all right for him."

"I was away when he left Sydney," said Miss Revel. "Report said that he was engaged to Rachael Levi, Rabbi Levi's daughter. When I returned I heard that he had quarrelled with his uncle and disappeared."

"He did not mention names, but it was over the marriage question he fell out with Fordham. No doubt Miss Levi was the lady concerned. Cliffe would only marry to suit himself. He has had a rough time, poor chap, but intends leaving by the mail to-morrow, and is coming to see me first."

"I suppose he is in town to-night?"

"No, camping over by the gap. I wanted him to take a shake-down here, especially as he did not seem quite up to the mark. This unseasonable wet weather has brought a good deal of fever about."

"He used to be a divine dancer," said Margaret. "I wonder if he knows I am here."

"Yes, he asked after you, but I don't think he cares to show up in his bush clothes. He has had hard luck, but is improved by it if anything, and is the same good old sort he used to be. Can I offer you some of these peaches, Miss Revel; they are as good as they look."

The Stephenses made a move soon afterwards. Mrs.

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Stephens had seen which way Billy Heron's eyes were attracted, and the magnet was not poor Minnie, and so the glimpse of heaven was perforce a brief one.

But about 5.30 p.m. next day Heron's cup was full, for Miss Revel slipped in through his side door to inquire after his health, and this time actually by herself.

"You look much better," she said.

"And I feel so. Sit down, and excuse me for a moment. I am sending Jacky with a note to Cliffe's camp. He has not been to see me, and I feel rather anxious."

"No, I can't stay. I really only called just to see how you were, and to tell you to be sure and get well before the Werrimu week. I have no end of gloves on Daisy Bell and the black and gold. As it is, I don't know what Mrs. Grundy and Mrs. Stephens will say if my unconventional visit becomes known," and she was gone again before Heron could turn round, leaving him to finish his note, not knowing whether to be delighted or angry first.

Margaret hurried quickly down a side street, and waited by the bridge until she saw Jacky's black face and strangely garmented form coming slowly towards her. She held her purse in her hand and intercepted him, and in a few moments Jacky was rich beyond all dreams of avarice, and was escorting the prettiest girl in Waveny to the gap scrub.

* * * * *

Of all miserable days in his life Cliffe had spent the worst, lying there in his wet clothes on the sodden ground in the grasp of rheumatic fever. Although he did not know it, he was delirious towards evening, and had given up trying to stumble townwards. The phantoms that had been stalking swiftly in and out of the dark forest aisles, leering at him with their strange inhuman faces, stopped and looked down at him, and then as suddenly disappeared again, as the clouds cleared from his brain in a last brief interval of reason. He felt that he must make another effort to reach Waveny while yet his senses were free.

He turned round slowly, bewailing at the torture the movement gave him, and then he saw coming straight towards him a tall, fair girl, whose hair against the slanting rays of the sunset looked like a halo of gold.

Was she but another of the phantoms that had been mocking him all day? Was it all a dream within a dream, and this seeming moment of sanity but a delusion like the rest? Miss Revel walked quickly towards him, followed by the black-boy, and then she stopped, her brown eyes wide with dismay.

He made a great effort, and struggled to his feet, then staggered, and pitched forward, a sound as of many waters in his ears, and through it all a woman's voice, crying, "Oh, Charlie, Charlie, my beloved, speak—only speak to me."

Comedy and tragedy are linked indissolubly in this world, and in after days Heron sometimes smiled to think how very unromantic was the medium through which he received first notice that the brightest dream of his heart was never to be a reality. Jacky was a faithful mimic, and threw into his soft, guttural tones a depth of despairing love and passion, as he clasped his ebony hands, and rolled his bright eyes, and repeated "Missie Revel's" words, "Charlie, my beloved, speak to me."

He had been giving a graphic representation of the scene of the finding of the sick man, but Heron was unprepared for this last detail. A mist seemed to rise before his eyes, and Jacky's voice, describing how he ran for the doctor, and how Cliffe was taken to the hospital, sounded further and further away.

Then he gathered himself together with an effort, and sent the astonished blackboy out of the room with injunctions to "Hold his tongue, and chop wood for an hour." And when Mrs. Stephens and Minnie came round later on to tell him the news, and to bring him a basin of gruel and wine, they were astonished to find that for once there was no admittance.

Indeed Minnie's sharp ears distinctly noted that the key was turned in the lock after they had knocked; but, being wiser than she appeared to be, persuaded her mother to raise the siege, and depart. She had seen a good deal with those innocent china-blue eyes of hers, and knew that many a heart is caught in the rebound.

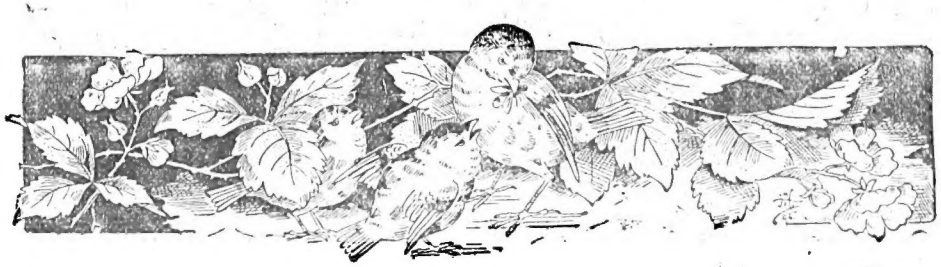
It was Heron who sent the telegram the next day, summoning Myles Fordham to what so nearly was the death-bed of his beloved and only relative, but Cliffe's strong constitution triumphed, and four weeks afterwards he was well enough to lie on the hospital's pleasant south veranda, while Margaret read to him in her soft contralto tones.

Even Mrs. Stephens, who kept so strict a guard over Waveny morals, could find no exception to this, for old Fordham proclaimed to everyone the fact that Margaret was to be his adopted daughter, inasmuch as she had consented to be Charlie's wife, a choice he thoroughly approved of, for mutual interest and anxiety had drawn the old man and the young girl very close together during those weeks of watching and waiting.

Billy Heron refused to go to Sydney and be best man at his friend's wedding, and Margaret, who sincerely liked him, was not a little hurt at his firm refusal; and wondered which of the Waveny maidens was responsible for his attachment to the place, for Billy seemed to have become a more desperate flirt than ever.

But Charlie, with a certain look in Heron's eyes still fresh in his memory, was neither offended nor surprised, for he knew that though to Margaret the world held one man only, there were two men whose world was Margaret.

Ethel Mills.



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PRINCESS FIAKI'S BIRTHDAY.

As it was winter and very cold, they had drawn round the prince the screens of precious woods, in the little hall where he sat dreaming, his arm upon an elbow-rest richly inlaid with pearl.

Magnificent robes of soft, downy silk overlapped and crossed their many-coloured collars upon the breast of Daimio, and on the shoulder and embroidered in gold on the sleeves were stars formed by five balls surrounding a sixth, the well-known coat of arms of the illustrious family of Kanga, which had no equal in power in all Japan save the family of Shendai and the family of Satsouma. Yes, this prince, who meditated thus in the depths of his palace, was very powerful, very rich, and very renowned; his people admired and feared him, his vassals were ready to die for him, his least desire was a law to all surrounding him; nevertheless to-day, he found himself exceedingly unhappy, helpless, poverty-stricken in thought and fancy: for had he not, for many days past, sought for some surprise to celebrate the birthday of his only daughter and had been able to imagine none.

It was also true that this princess, who to-morrow would be sixteen years of age, possessed all that it was possible to possess—marvellous birds, fantastic fishes, extravagant dogs, chariots, horses, palaces, everything that one could conceive of, and even marvels of which one did not dream brought specially for her from distant countries.

The Daimio told himself, shaking his head, that he had too much indulged his beloved daughter; that he should not have indulged her thus till she had exhausted—she, hardly entered upon life—all the riches of the world. Now he had nothing to offer his child, to astonish and charm her.

Still pondering, still wondering, for a long, long while through the cloudy transparency of the window, he allowed his wearied gaze to wander over the stripped garden, under the grey and weeping heavens.

"What did she really desire?"

Suddenly he sprang to his feet.

"We will see her," said he, "see her, and perhaps be able, without her suspecting anything to divine her caprice."

He turned and struck the gong hanging by a silken cord from the teeth of a monster in bronze.

Immediately the panels forming the walls glided noiselessly apart, separated to each side, permitting you to see a long perspective of room after room filled by *samourais* of service, pages, guards, and household domestics. The *samourais*—noble vassals wearing two swords—bowed profoundly before him; the pages and servants prostrated themselves, brows to the ground.

"I am going to visit my daughter," said the Daimio, gravely. "Come!"

And immediately the escort formed about him, while the guards ran in advance to clear the way.

Fiaki—that is to say, Ray of Sunlight—in a well-closed hall of her own special palace, was seated, according to custom, upon broad white mats laid upon the floor, the long folds of her magnificent trained robes billowing and spreading about her like the leaves of a gorgeous fan, tissues, muslins, silks, and satins, the most abundant of them all a sky-blue gauze figured with spiders' webs in which were caught the petals of rare flowers.

The face of this young girl was white as cream, her tiny mouth like a cherry cleft in twain, disclosing two rows of fine little rice grains; her eyebrows shaved and replaced by two little black spots made with a brush and placed high up on her brow; while her long hair, following the mode of royal fashion, was unbound and streaming down her back to lose itself in the folds of her garments.

The maids of honour formed a half-circle about their mistress; and in front of her, behind a light carved balustrade, a dancer moved slowly, waving her fan in time to the notes of the orchestra, intoning a strange, weird chant, with a *gotto*, a *biva*, three kinds of flutes, a drum, and a tambourine.

At the prince's entrance the symphony ceased, and Fiaki quickly concealed behind the spiders' webs of her sleeve the twin cherries of her lips, which was a salute to her father, tender and chaste.

He smiled with pleasure at sight of the beauty and

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grace of his idolized child. She rose to greet him, and, like a sea agitated by a sudden tempest, the silk, satin, muslin, and brocade of her skirts rustled and undulated behind her. He caressed her lovingly, heaped her with tender names, calling her his Incomparable, his Supernatural Beauty, his Perfume of Heaven; then he demanded of her if she were perfectly happy, if there was aught that she desired?

"Ah! illustrious prince! adored father!" Fiaki responded, bending backward her supple body in a pretty movement of sorrow, "how can anyone be happy when the earth suffers as now, and the sky continually drops tears? The gods have been cruel in creating winter. Not even the purity of the snow can create for me an illusion of my vanished spring."

The Daimio listened thoughtfully; then, in a deeper reverie still, returned to his apartment.

"It is certain," said he to himself, "certain that spring, and spring only, is all that Fiaki desires."

And he stopped to lend an ear to the sharp wind blowing against the palace walls.

Already the twilight was far advanced, the dark night waiting to take the gray evening's place.

"Yes, spring, spring only," murmured the unhappy Daimio, dejectedly resuming the seat that he had quitted a while ago.

Suddenly his sorrow changed to anger, and he summoned his prime minister. Nai-Dai-Tsin ran, bending low his back and auguring nothing good for himself or others from the gloomy face of his master. The Daimio was silent a moment, as if hesitating to give an order so extraordinary; but soon, with an irritated shrug of the shoulders, he spoke:

"To-morrow, Nai-Dai-Tsin," said he, "will be my daughter's birthday. I desire—do you hear me? I desire, I say, that dawn shall break on the trees and bushes of the park and all the country round about the palace covered with flowers, as in the first months of spring. Go!"

"You shall be obeyed, master," replied the prime minister, bowing himself out backward.

But once outside, consternation seized him, and he let his arms fall helplessly in the long sleeves of his gown.

"It is exile, it is death!" murmured he, "yes death! For I have not the time to fly sufficiently far away, and thunder has fallen upon me from the clear sky full of prosperity!"

His legs bent under him; he caught at the walls to keep from sinking.

"What could he do to avoid disgrace? Nothing, nothing," he told himself, after he had thought over the matter carefully.

For the pleasure of his child his royal master had seriously commanded spring! For a long while he stood without thought, his head hanging like a ball of lead on his miserable breast; then he cast lethargy from him and turned with a resolute air.

"Come, courage, Nai-Dai-Tsin," said he; "a Japanese does not tremble before death. Quick, the sabre first, the stroke in the body; the poniard for the throat!"

He drew out the weapon and prepared for the stroke, but paused reflectively.

Was it really impossible to simulate spring, and thereby, instead of ruin and suicide, conquer eternal fortune? No use to despair too quickly; there was always time to die.

But he couldn't repress a start of terror on seeing how deep the shadow had grown beyond the palace and how rapidly the lights were springing up, like fireflies in the darkness.

"All the park and all the country round about," murmured he; "and only one night!"

Then, on the run, he gained his dwelling, called the council together, and, without giving them time even to seat themselves, imparted to them the extraordinary order transmitted him by the prince.

"An order to be executed under penalty of death before the dawn of the day," said he, recklessly indifferent to the terrified faces of those surrounding him: "the prince's humour is not to be trifled with; he will heed no reason. But listen and fully take in the idea that has come to me, which may be the salvation of all. Go from here and set to work at once in all the country round about, men, women, children, nobles, labourers, merchants, and peasants, with silk, cloth, satin, velvet, paper, or gauze, to work at once, I say, manufacturing artificial flowers.

"If stuff be lacking, let them cut up their clothes, their hangings, their screens, their rugs for the floor—briefly, all that may seem to them necessary or good; then, all these flowers, before daybreak, too, must be tied, nailed, glued, or sewn upon the trees, plants, and bushes, the smallest along the edges of the roads, the tallest farthest away in the fields; all the artists and painters in the neighbourhood following upon their steps to direct the decoration and give finishing touches of the brush wherever needful. I, in person, will watch over and foresee everything; our safety depends upon it."

Less than an hour later, there was not a palace, a house in the city, or a hut in the country where they were not feverishly occupied manufacturing flowers; and whoever had looked from the tower of Kanga palace, shortly after the turn of the night, into the park and neighbourhood, would have believed himself in a sea of lanterns, which surged, and leaped from tree to thicket—an army of fireflies chased by foxes.

But at this hour the illustrious Daimio snored peacefully behind his screen of gold-incrusted iron-wood; and the Incomparable princess, in the softened rays of light sifting through the frail pearl leaves of a swinging *lampadaire*, reclined upon her cushions and sought to compose in her dreams a fitting poem on Spring.

Her women had just finished dressing her next morning when the Princess Fiaki heard under her window the notes of an orchestra and the chant of many voices.

"Ah!" said she, with a wearied gesture, "I remember! My birthday to-day! Why was I born in winter?"

The maids of honour threw wide the window sashes.

"True, mistress," returned they, "but see, the beautiful weather!"

Beautiful indeed, the sky, for once, as if it had been a courtier clothed for the *fête* in a heavenly blue, across which a gay sun rolled of a gold a trifle pale. Languidly the princess advanced to the outer gallery and leant from the balustrade. But then what a cry of surprise and joy!

What was all this she saw before her? Was it possible? Flowers, flowers everywhere! The spring, then, had come!

"What!" said she, turning from side to side and running from end to end of the gallery, "almond-trees red and white, peach blooms, lillies, apple blossoms! What a miracle!"

Moreover, through all these spring roads and pathways gaily dressed throngs were hurrying to pay their

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respects to their prince's daughter; the great *seigneurs* on horseback, the noble dames in bullock carts or the regular *nourimanos*.

Fiaki hastened to descend; the Daimio met her upon the terrace steps and she threw herself into his arms with a cry of "Father! father! thou art in truth a god!"

Then they strolled through the park and gardens to admire this magic spring. Fiaki laughed and danced and clapped her hands like a child, and immediately a great chariot shaped like a pavilion, all aglow with gold stars and drawn by white bullocks, drew up at the terrace steps for the princess and her maids of honour to take a ride through the country. Then the visitors entered their cars and fell in line, and it was one long, continuous, joyous, brilliant, and interminable procession.

The prince led the way, the prime minister beside him, grave and impassable in his triumph. The scene of enchantment was the same along all the roads, the warmth of the sun and the light golden fog that faintly veiled the face of nature rendering still more complete the illusion of spring, richer, more flowery, more generous in all respects than the real spring-time.

"And what a delicious perfume!" cried the happy little princess, every instant thrusting her pretty little head out of the chariot to see the better, "what a delicious perfume floats in the air from all these flowers!"

Delicious indeed! The Daimio himself smelt it—scent fountains and atomizers, in fact, hidden in the harnessing of the beeves, the spray from which mingled itself with the breath of the animals.

Ever and ever so far they went into the country. Wild with delight, Fiaki could not abridge her happiness. Then she wanted to return by another road—was it possible?

A little uneasy, the prince regarded his impassible minister.

"Does the princess desire," demanded he, "to return by the hills or the orchards?"

"The orchards, by all means," the young girl responded: "it is farther and more beautiful."

And by the orchards they returned; as Fiaki had said, more beautiful than all they had seen. Soon the pink blossoms of a plum-tree caught the princess's attention.

"I must have it," she cried, "a branch of that plum-tree to carry with me as a souvenir of this wonderful spectacle."

"The game is up!" moaned the prince to himself, throwing an appealing glance upon his minister.

But the minister had neither paled nor trembled.

"I will do myself the honour of plucking it for you," said he, putting spurs to his horse and returning a moment later with a superbly flowered branch.

No sooner done than the maids of honour wanted a piece, and then all the noble dames, seeing that they were really permitted to pluck the blossoms, leapt from their cars and demanded fragrant souvenirs on their own account.

Really this was too much! The prince paled with anger and was going to order them to move on, but the minister reassured him with an imperceptible shrug; he knew women well—he had foreseen this also, and at a sign to an assistant a cart drove up loaded to the top with dewy blossoms, and all were provided with that which they demanded.

Nai-Dai-Tsin had unhesitatingly pillaged all the conservatories of the palaces, and had men mingling with the crowd with bags full of flowers till the word was given. The prince, who had not divined this simple device, was speechless with amazement.

"Thou art truly a wonderful man," he murmured in the minister's ear, as they re-entered the palace, "and thou hast done far more than I could possibly have hoped; but even in the delight of this wonderful fête, there has been in me a dull disquiet—how shall we ever be able to surpass this spectacle for the coming year?"

Meanwhile as the Daimio tarried to speak to his minister, Fiaki descended from her chariot; at the same time the son of the Prince of Satsouma, who had far to come and who had just arrived at the palace with a brillant escort, advanced to salute her.

A very handsome young man, too, and so brave that in spite of his youth he was already much talked about. Deeply moved at so much beauty, he stood before Fiaki, and she, no less blushing and confused, buried her face in the fragrant blossoms in her hand and could say not a word.

Nai-Dai-Tsin, who seemed to see everything, called the prince's attention to them, and to the mutual mental disturbance that seemed to leave them both tongue-tied.

"When the seventeenth year of your daughter arrives for her, my lord," said he, "give her for husband that handsome prince there, and she will love him more than to-day she loves the spring."

The Daimio's face broadened into a delightful smile and he hurriedly thrust a gold and bronze trinket into the prime minister's hand,

"The key of my treasure-box, Nai-Dai-Tsin," said he; "take it, use what you will, and heed my advice—be not too modest!"

J. Goste.

THE INVADERS.

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BETRAYED.

NIGHT had fallen on the sleeping camp, a windy, rainy night, and not a sound of life broke the stillness save the occasional challenge of a distant sentry as Private Riley, muffled in his great-coat, stood leaning on his rifle at his post. The post was a remote one, far removed from the regimental guard in the X lines, where Riley's regiment was quartered.

The sentry's duty was to guard the mortuary, in which a soldier from a regiment just returned from India lay dead, awaiting his funeral on the morrow. Such a duty as this, on such a night would have tried the nerves of many a good soldier. Private Riley had proved on more than one battlefield that he was no coward, but he was not a good soldier; if the truth must be told, he bore the worst character in the regiment.

He had enlisted some nine years before, had proved a promising young soldier, was promoted and soon became sergeant, but lost his stripes through a drunken escapade.

Foreign service and a small frontier war gave him another chance, and in six months he was sergeant again, for a few weeks only; his besetting sin once more reducing him to the ranks.

From that day things went from bad to worse, and Riley was in constant trouble. His harsh and overbearing manner as a sergeant, had made him many enemies. Some of them, now non-commissioned officers themselves, were not slow to remember old grievances when opportunity arose, which was only too frequently with him.

He was the dog with the bad name, and was shunned by all, with one exception. This exception was young Private Courtney. Courtney was a soldier, born of a long line of fighting ancestors, with that deep rooted love of the service that makes a man a good soldier and nothing else. A happy-go-lucky favourite everywhere, he had failed to pass his examination for a commission. Still determined to persevere, and with the hope of winning it at the point of the bayonet, he had joined the ranks feeling sure of his eventual success.

On joining the regiment he was pleased to recognise in Riley a man whom he had known formerly in his native village.

Cheered by the recognition coming at a time when there was hardly a man on speaking terms with him, Riley's heart softened to the young soldier, and he did a hundred and one things that an old hand only can do to help the recruit in his new surroundings.

A curious friendship sprang up between these two men, which tended greatly to the improvement of Riley, and might have resulted in his complete reformation, had not a tragic event brought it to an abrupt termination.

As he stood leaning on his rifle this particular night his thoughts were on anything but his duty. A trifling incident of the day had ruffled his too easily disturbed temper, and the enforced abstinence while on guard disturbed him. "Hang it!" he muttered, as he brought his rifle to the slope and took a sharp turn up and down his post,

"Here's fourpence; go and get me a pot of beer."

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thinking of the comfortable barrack room. Halting again in his former position, the sound of a footstep called him to attention. It was not the step of a soldier, and in idle curiosity he waited to see who was in this out-of-the-way place at such an hour.

A little boy emerged from the darkness and stumbled against him.

Here was an opportunity not to be thrown away! Seizing the child by the arm, he shouted:

"Hullo, boy, what are you doing here, a-trespassing on Government property?"

The frightened child whimpered out that he was going home.

"Duty's duty," said the soldier, "and it is my duty to shoot you dead!"

"Oh, if you please, sir——" began the boy, but the soldier cut him short.

"Well, I'm a kind-hearted man although I am a soldier, and if I do let you off, you must do something for me."

"I'll do whatever you tell me, sir."

"Do you know the Redan public-house, first turning on the right and straight on?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here's fourpence, go and get me a pot of beer, and mind if you ain't back with it in five minutes, every soldier in camp will be turned out to hunt you down. Off you go. Quick march! double!"

As the boy ran off, glad to escape so easily, the sentry resumed his march. "Another hour," he muttered, as he listened to the sound of a distant clock. "Ah! here comes the youngster with the beer."

"There's many a slip between cup and lip," so Riley found, for as he stretched out his hand for the pot the tramp of soldiers approaching struck his ear. The sergeant with a visiting patrol. Why could they not leave him alone, he had been visited once since being posted.

There was no time for thought. Boy and beer were bundled unceremoniously inside the mortuary, with a hasty caution to keep silent until released, the door was closed, and the sentry challenged the advancing party. The answer to his challenge coming in the well-known and hated voice of the corporal, and the tramp of many feet told the dismayed soldier that it was the relief that was approaching. The night watch had passed quickly. He had mistaken the hour, and in another minute he would be on his way to the guard-room.

The long line of men halted, and as one of them stepped out and stood with rifle at the port facing him, Riley saw by the light of the lantern which the corporal held that it was Courtney who was to relieve him. The complication of the situation flashed through his brain. Courtney might fall into severe disgrace at the outset of his career, or receive a severe shock. He knew well enough that after the manner of soldiers, Courtney's comrades of the guard-room would have done all in their power to try the nerves of the recruit about to stand his first night-guard.

Riley saw by the light of the lantern which the corporal held that it was Courtney who was to relieve him.

As he looked into the face of his only friend, all his better instincts struggled to the surface. He would confess to the breach of discipline, take the well-deserved punishment, and save him.

Mechanically he stammered through the orders to the relieving sentry, but with such hesitation as to call forth a sharp, sarcastic rebuke from the corporal, formerly his victim, now his most vindictive persecutor.

"Anything to report?" growled the corporal.

"No," came the answer, firm and distinct. The change was affected, and the corporal ordered:

"Sentries pass!"

For an instant Riley hesitated before obeying the order in the hope of giving a word or sign of warning to Courtney, but the vigilance of the corporal prevented either. The next moment Riley was marching back to the guard-room, and Courtney was guarding the dead.

Left alone to his dreary duty, Courtney, though a brave youth, gradually became a prey to nervous fear.

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The weird stories told in the guard-room of mysterious things that had happened to lonely sentries would recur, and strive as he might he could not fix his thoughts on other matters. He craved for action, but the only action possible was the short march up and down past the door of the mortuary. In spite of a strong desire to shrink to the further end of his post, bravely he continued his march, but his nervous dread of the unknown increased at every turn.

Was it fancy, or did he hear a noise inside the mortuary?

Fancy, of course; he was a cowardly fool, and he rested at the end of his post. The storm lulled, and his courage returned. For an instant the moon shone clear and unclouded. Throwing the rifle over his shoulder he was starting for another turn, but what was that? A ghastly white face at the window of the mortuary! As he gazed in terror the moon was hidden and an awful darkness followed.

Seized with a desperate longing for a human presence he would have shouted to the nearest sentry, but that was useless, the storm would drown his voice. Shaking in every limb, and half paralysed, he marched resolutely past the door and turned.

The storm was breaking, and by the light of the moon he saw the door of the mortuary slowly open! An overwhelming desire to rush to the guard-room possessed him. Impossible! A soldier must not desert his post; Slowly the door opened, and a white hand grasped the edge of it.

What was the meaning of this? Courtney's blood seemed to freeze in his veins, a dreadful creepy feeling went down his back and his hair seemed as though it would lift his busby from his head. His fingers gripped the butt of his rifle convulsively and seemed to cling to it as though they were parts of a vice rather than a portion of his anatomy that should have been well under the control of his will; his legs shook and appeared to be giving way under him. Could it be that his comrade, lying in the mortuary, was about to appear before him in shadowy out-line, in full uniform, like those phantom soldiers in India about the time of the Mutiny—the men who had been seen digging in the trenches during the night—as related by some of the fellows of his company?

The inarticulate words of the challenge rattled in the sentry's throat.

The door opened still wider.

He made an effort to win back his courage and firmness, and made a step forward with the intention of going resolutely to the door of the mortuary and solving the awful mystery of the white face and the white hand; but he stopped dead at that one step and could go no farther. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth and his throat was parched, but he felt that he must at least utter the challenge.

The inarticulate words of the challenge rattled in the sentry's throat, as his rifle clattered on the pavement and he fell, with his face to the starlit sky.

* * * * *

An hour later the sergeant with Private Riley and another soldier visited the sentries. No challenge came from No. 6 post as they advanced towards it. The door of the mortuary was open. Private Courtney lay cold and dead on his back, his rifle beside him and his feet to the door.

A. Clark Little.

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A MINING TRANSACTION.

So you feel curious to know how and where I made my little bit of money? No, it wasn't at Klondyke; let those who like go to such a place as that, but, for my part, I think the risk too great and the chance of making money too small.

I didn't join in any "rush," I didn't even go out of my way to find my gold mine; it just came into my way. I believe in seizing your opportunity, and when this chance presented itself I decided to take it, although it was not without risk. I didn't dig for my gold in the ordinary way; it came to me through a little speculation in mining property. This is how it was.

It was in the early nineties and I was out in Western Australia, to which colony I had emigrated because I thought I might pick up a better living than there seemed any prospect of doing at home; and while I was searching for an easy means of getting a livelihood I heard the history of the King's Gold Mine.

This mine was one of three plains that had once belonged to two miners who had reaped no benefit from them; these men had handed over one claim—afterwards known as the King's Gold Mines—to a man out there who had advanced them a small sum of money to enable them to prosecute their operations in the other two claims.

What had become of those miners I never heard, but their claims were useless, and they disappeared.

The third claim was worked for a time under the direction of its second owner, Mr. John Reeks, who found a very small quantity of gold in it and then took advantage of the gold-mining craze to turn it into a company; he sold his own shares in the concern and retired with a nice little fortune, leaving the mine to occupy the attentions of those who had invested in it.

Disappointment followed the floating of this venture; the mine yielded nothing, and as there was no more capital forthcoming to work it, operations were soon suspended and the mines fell into disuse. The shares, which were all held by colonists, became practically worthless and might have been had for the price of a drink.

When I made the acquaintance of the mine there was a little work going on. A certain shrewd gentleman, by name Henry Black, who possessed considerable influence in that part of the colony, had paid a visit to the King's and inspected it; a few days after his first visit he paid a second call in company with an expert; and a little later still he set some men to work and began looking round for shares that might be drifting about unappreciated

He had obtained the permission of the Board of Directors to spend a little of his own money on the mine; those three officials had given their consent with much indifference, as they did not think the game worth the candle, and it was not their money which Mr. Black was spending.

The miners had not been at work many days before they turned up some gold—only a little, but gold all the same. This was kept as quiet as possible, and Black became more persistent in his search for the mining scrip. It was at this point that he met me, and I helped him in his endeavours.

There were 50,000 shares and Black was anxious to get at least 30,000 of these in his own hands. The directors held very few, not more than 5,000 between them, so that left just 25,000 for Black to get hold of in order to have control of the property, for the directors were all on his side. We had to hunt about for some days in the neighbourhood to find the men who owned shares, but at last we raked up the number we wanted and then we stopped. The balance did not trouble Black, as he would have a majority if he could succeed in obtaining the transfer of the shares from the holders he had approached. Of the remaining 20,000, about half were owned by people in the immediate neighbourhood—by which I mean within fifty miles or so —and the other half belonged to people who lived at either some distance or in other colonies.

Things were not done out there exactly the same as they would be at home. Rumours of what was going on had reached the ears of the "balance," as we called the outstanding shareholders, and they began to get suspicious; it occurred to them that it might not be to their interest that these transfers should take place, although they could not have explained the reason for their suspicions, and they resolved to prevent the transfers being effected. The fact that if the directors agreed to the registration the matter was in order and they had no right to interfere did not appeal to them in the least; they meant to stop the proceedings if they could.

The secretary and I went to the several shareholders, paid them the price of the purchase and got their signatures. As Black was giving them five shillings a share and most of the sellers had picked up the scrip for sixpence or less, they were well satisfied. The next thing was to lodge the deeds at the registered office of the company, which was close to the mine, and hold a

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Board meeting to pass them. Black was to be present and affix his signature just previous to the meeting; the secretary had prepared the new certificate in readiness.

And that was where the trouble came in.

The dissentients determined to prevent the meeting, but Black and the directors got wind of this intention and resolved to be first.

Instead of waiting for the appointed day, which was forty-eight hours off, they decided to go without further delay to the King's Gold Mine and settle the business.

They all lived at a town fifty miles distant from the mine, so Black chartered a special train that very evening and made arrangements with the Board and the secretary to travel by that special at nine o'clock.

It was just before nine when the six of us reached the railway station where the engine and a special carriage were waiting for us. We entered the carriage —all except Black, who was standing on the platform talking with the station-master—and were chatting gaily, when our talk was interrupted by a hubbub on the platform. Putting my head out of the door I saw two men in altercation with Black and the station-master.

"You send that train off at your own risk," vociferated the foremost of the new-comers.

"Of course I do," answered the official calmly. "That's what I'm here for."

"These men must not be taken to Allwell," shouted the second man angrily. "They are going to commit——"

"That's enough of it!" cried Black. "We have chartered this train and can do as we like."

Then followed some violent talking, threatening and gesticulating, and Black slipped away from them and entered the carriage, leaving the two objectors to threaten the station-master, the engine-driver and the stoker.

In a few words he explained the situation. Others were coming to assist the two ringleaders, he said, and our best plan was to get out of the carriage and pretend to go off, but all the while we should make our way down the line for about half a mile where the "special" would pick us up. The engine-driver and station master would pretend that the engine was going to put the carriage in the siding and then go to the shed, so as to throw our enemies off their guard, but once clear of the station the train would run along the line, pick us up and dash off to Allwell.

We must slip out of the carriage on the off-side and he would give the tip to the driver; when the objectors found that the carriage was empty and that the train was, apparently, not to be made use of, they would conclude that they had scored.

Ten minutes later we were more than half-a-mile down the line, waiting for the train to come along. In the meantime the dissentients, reinforced by several others, had discovered that we had decamped and had allowed the engine and carriage to move slowly from the platform, the driver made the whistle shriek as if in fiendish exultation and sent the engine rattling over the metals.

We saw it coming along and gave a great yell for the double purpose of expressing our feelings and telling the driver where we were; and in a few seconds we were once more seated in the carriage and rushing along towards Allwell.

But we soon found that we were not quite out of the wood. About ten miles down the line we had to pass through a station named Boolong, and as we rattled through it we saw an engine moving slowly from a siding on to the main track.

"Whew!" whistled Black. "Do you see what they've done? They have stationed someone here to intercept us if we got out from Relton, and on discovering that they had been tricked they wired to this place to have us stopped. But we have got past just in time and now we have the line to ourselves."

The next hour was the most exciting I have ever been through. Acting on Black's instructions, I opened the carriage door and clambered to the engine, where I told the driver that he must put on all the speed he could in order to out-distance the pursuing engine and get us to Allwell in time to pass the transfers before the enemy arrived. The directors were saying hard things about themselves for not having the seal of the company and certain books with them instead of allowing them to remain at the office, as in that case they could have passed the transfers in Relton or in the carriage.

In a few seconds we were flying along the metals with the other engine tearing after us. I don't think either of us ever stopped to consider what would be the result if our engine suddenly broke down; and what the pursuers thought of doing when they got near enough to us was also, most probably, left out of calculation. They could hardly leap off their engine and intercept us, and if they ran into us and smashed us up, the chances were very much in favour of their suffering to the same extent as ourselves.

Away we went in the dark night, the sparks flying from both engines and the reddish smoke resembling the fiery breath of some huge monster. We kept well ahead for about four miles, and then I noticed that the pursuing engine was drawing nearer. Presently we jolted over some points, and on looking backward, half a minute later I observed that the adversary was a little to our right instead of directly behind us. I was puzzled for a moment to account for this and then the explanation came like a flash; the engine was on the other line and would endeavour to overtake us in that way.

I urged the driver to get up all the speed he could, telling him what had occurred. "They can't very well stop us even in that manner," I added, "but if they reach the destination at the same time as ourselves, that will upset our plans, as they will prevent us from getting to the office."

"They can stop us if they only get a yard start," returned the driver grimly. "There is about thirty miles of this track and then it goes off to a single line before we get to Allwell. It's a race now to see who can get to the single line first."

I emitted a long whistle; now I understood the manœuvre.

And the worst of it was that our pursuers appeared to be gaining on us. There was no need to say anything to our driver; professional pride as well as the prospect of earning a round sum of money made him do his utmost. I could only endeavour to keep calm and watch the race—by no means an easy task however.

Nearer and nearer the pursuing engine came, and at the end of the five miles we were running almost level. Not a word was spoken between the two parties; I doubt whether even so much as an order to the driver was uttered on either side; with set faces we watched the course of the race and waited anxiously for the result.

Thus we flew along side by side in the darkness for several minutes, neither engine gaining any great advantage over the other. Sometimes our adversary was a little in advance and at others our iron steed had

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the lead, but there was no real gain, mile after mile was covered and at last I went to our driver and asked him if we were not now very close to the single line.

"Less than five miles," he said quietly. "What is it to be? Are we to go on and chance it? We are on the straight, but they have to make a little curve."

It was a critical thing to decide. I hardly cared to pronounce the words that might mean the death warrant of several people, for if we collided at the junction of the two lines of metals there was very little probability that any of us would escape. The responsibility of the decision was taken from me by Black, who at that moment shouted out of the window; I only caught the concluding words, but they were sufficient.

"——get on the single line first!"

What a strange power some men have over others. The very fact that he had spoken seemed to settle the matter at once; it never occurred to me, at any rate, to question the result and I believe it was the same with our driver. We just went as hard as we could for that single line.

One mile; two, three! Both engines were running level and, as it appeared to certain destruction. Were the dissentients as determined as ourselves? Another mile, and then I found that we had the lead and were keeping it. We were going no faster than before, for the simple reason that we were at top speed, so I concluded that the others had faltered and were slackening in order to avoid a collision. And then we dashed on to the single line.

We had won the race so far, but would there be time for us to get to the office and settle the little affair on hand? Our enemies, after all, could reach Allwell practically at the same time as ourselves. Our single line was not very straight, so that unless the pursuing engine kept close behind us we could not see it. I kept constantly on the watch for it to appear just behind us round the bends, but it did not come into view and we reached Allwell without catching another glimpse of it.

I question whether a party of non-professionals ever sprinted along a country road at the same rate as we did after we left the train. We reached the office and the director at once proceeded to transact business. We had finished and were on our way back to the station, where there was a house in which we could pass the night, when we met our pursuers.

Then we learnt that their engine which had slackened in order to take the points, had somehow fouled them; the engine had run off the metals, but had come to no great harm, the chief result to our adversaries being the loss of time, which enabled us to carry out our plan.

After all, they benefited in the same proportion as Black himself, for their shares went up in value and they made a fine thing out of them. If they had succeeded in thwarting Black, there is every reason to believe that the shares of the King's Gold Mine would still be worth about sixpence each. But I suppose they thought that he would make a heap of money and they would get nothing.

About my own little bit? Well, I was of considerable assistance to Black, and he is a man who thoroughly appreciates that kind of thing. I think that explains it.

G. Day.

£250 * *

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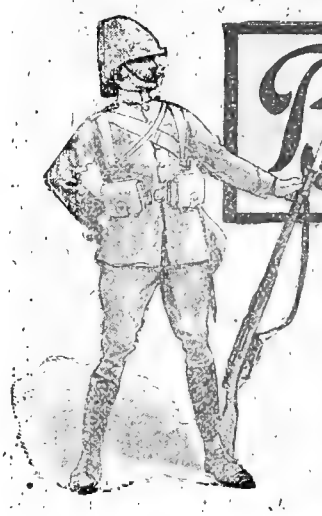


Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

INTRODUCTION.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write this strong and exciting serial nearly four years ago graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

The story, coming so soon after the Jameson Raid, was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

SUMMARY OF OPENING CHAPTERS.

Chapter I.—The scene opens on the Rand. It is the eve of Amajuba day, and a State ball is being given. To this comes Prince Paul Regna, a Polish nobleman, and his daughter, Princess Vavara. They are introduced to Dr. Leyds.

Chapter II.—Dr. Leyds returns to Pretoria to attend a midnight consultation at the Government buildings. The Prince's rooms are in the Grand Hotel opposite. By tapping the wires, which cross the street at this point, the Prince and his daughter overhear all that goes on, and telegraph the result by secret code to Europe.

Chapters III. and IV.—Amajuba day dawns. The Secretary accompanies the Prince and Princess to Krugersdorp, where, from the base of the Monument of Independence, the President makes a great proclamation. The Convention of London is abrogated, the absolute independence of the South African Republic is declared; the President unfurls a Union Jack and rends it to pieces. So the storm bursts!

Chapters V. and VI.—On the following day, Major-General Carrington learns at Buluwayo that all the wires have been cut between Rhodesia and the south and east. He concludes that this is due to Boer hostility, and prepares to meet it. Meanwhile a powerful British squadron appears unexpectedly in Delagoa Bay, and Lieutenant Ferris is sent ashore to take possession of the telegraph station.

CHAPTER VII.

Forcing the Lock.

The smoke-cloud towards Inyack Island had now resolved itself into several distinct streams of smoke which proceeded respectively from the funnels of Her Majesty's battleships *Victorious*, *Magnificent*, and *Majestic*, the cruisers *Terrible*, *Powerful*, *Edgar*, *Endymion*, and *Grafton*, and the torpedo-destroyers *Ardent*, *Boxer*, *Bruiser*, *Daring*, *Ferret*, and *Foam*.

They were coming up at the full speed of the battleships, seventeen knots, or nearly twenty statute miles, which was better than that of the Russians by a good couple of knots.

When they were about ten miles from the land the two great cruisers *Powerful* and *Terrible* put on their full speed of twenty-two knots, closely followed by the *Edgar*, *Endymion*, and *Grafton* doing a good twenty, with the obvious intention of heading off the Russians which lay in the seven-fathom water outside the mouth of the harbour.

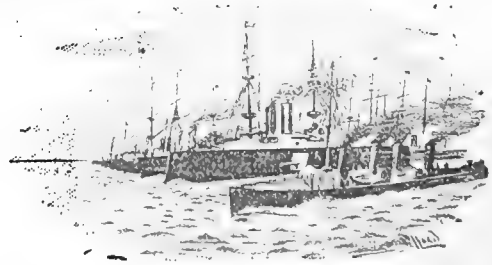
The three battleships, attended by the destroyers, followed the cruisers in column of line abreast about half-a-mile astern.

Not many minutes now elapsed before his glasses showed the Russian Admiral how formidable a foe he had to contend with. A single glance was enough to convince him that he was completely cut off from the sea, and must either fight at practically hopeless odds or surrender.

How he had been caught in such a trap was utterly beyond his comprehension. His orders had told him to pay a friendly visit to Cape Town and coal there. This done, he was to weigh anchor, ostensibly with the object of proceeding to the China Seas, steam straight to the latitude of Delagoa Bay, and lie with banked fires thirty miles to the eastward of Inyack Island, there to await orders from the land. These orders he had received through the medium of the yacht which the solitary watcher on Reuben Point had seen steam out to sea twenty-four hours before. On receipt of these he had steamed into the Bay.

His arrival, moreover, had been strictly timed to anticipate by some six hours the arrival of the German squadron consisting of the ironclads, *Kaiser* and *Deutchland*, the cruisers *Geier*, *See Adler*, and *Condor*, and six first and second-class torpedo boats, which Mr. Secretary Leyds had confidently expected to be in possession of the "keyhole of Africa" on the morning of the 17th December.

But, whatever the reasons of these extraordinary happenings, there could not be the slightest doubt as to the purpose of the British squadron. The two lines of cruisers and battleships took up their position across the ten-



fathom channel to the north of Elephant Island, thus completely barring the way to all vessels of such draft as the Russians. Then one of the destroyers, the *Bruiser*, left the side of the *Majestic*, flying a white flag, and came tearing through the smooth water at some twenty knots an hour towards the *Navarin*.

She ran alongside the Russian flagship, and the lieutenant in command delivered a note from the British Admiral stating that he accepted the shots fired at the *Thrasher* as an act of war and declaration of hostilities, and calling upon the Russian Admiral, in the interests of humanity, to surrender forthwith to a force which an appended list of the British warships would prove to be of overwhelming strength.

The note concluded with the brief but startling state-

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ment that Delagoa Bay and the surrounding territory had been purchased by Great Britain from Portugal, and that, therefore, the Russian squadron was in British waters without either invitation or permission.

Politely worded as it was, it was by no means a pleasant message to receive. Vice-Admiral Tcherkov glanced from under his frowning brows at the formidable list, and in that glance recognised the inevitable. In number of ships, speed, and gunpowder, he was hopelessly at a disadvantage.

Altogether he was between the horns of an exceedingly awkward dilemma. To fight meant almost certain destruction; to surrender without a fight meant not only disgrace but probably also court-martial and death. Flight was absolutely out of the question, for his ships were completely hemmed in by the British squadron, which entirely commanded the only practicable channel between the perils of the Lech Reef and the Cockburn Shoals.

As most men in such a position would have done, he tried to temporise. He assured the lieutenant of the *Bruiser* that he had no intention of sinking the *Thrasher*, as he could easily have done had he desired to do so. That he had suspected a sinister motive in what he thought to be the unwarrantable landing of the British bluejackets, and therefore thought he had a right to stop the destroyer by force after she had disregarded his signal. Further, that he was not aware that his country was in a state of war with Great Britain, and that therefore he claimed an armistice of twelve hours to enable him to communicate with his Government by telegraph.

The reasoning was plausible enough, seeing that it had to be formulated on the spur of the moment, but it went only a very short way with Lieutenant Cardigan of the *Bruiser*, for he listened to it with a just perceptible smile on his clean shaven lip, and answered it politely and uncompromisingly by saying:

"My instructions, sir, are to take back your answer 'Yes,' or 'No.' I have no power to make terms or to listen to proposals. If I return without an answer the squadron will advance, and fire will be opened immediately."

Very important issues are sometimes decided by very trifling causes, and it was thus what was afterwards known as the Battle of Delagoa Bay came to be fought. There was something exceedingly unpleasant in the quiet tones of the young lieutenant, a suggestion of absolute and unquestioned superiority which set the hot semi-Tartar blood of Admiral Tcherkov on fire, and scattered whatever prudent considerations might have been forming in his mind to the winds.

His sallow face flushed a muddy red, and his bristly whiskers and moustache seemed to stiffen out with anger. He stamped his foot on the deck, and said in a harsh and somewhat husky voice:

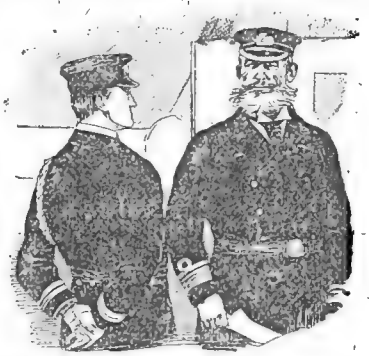
"The servants of my master are not accustomed to be bullied in that fashion, sir. Go back and tell your admiral that I shall obey my orders at any cost. They are to remain here until the arrival of another squadron, which is not many hours behind you, and here I shall remain either till that squadron arrives or the last of my ships is sunk.

"Tell him, too, if he does not already know it, that the fight will not be so unequal as he seems to hope for. There may be no escape for us, but it may be that there will be none for you either if our friends find you here in the condition in which I hope we shall leave you. That is my answer. Good-morning, sir."

With that Admiral Tcherkov abruptly turned his back on the lieutenant of the *Bruiser* and walked aft. That officer smiled gravely, yet not sadly—such a smile as a man might permit himself when holding four aces at poker. He took a rapid but comprehensive glance over the decks of the *Navarin*, touched his cap to the officer in charge of the gangway, and walked stiffly and deliberately down the ladder.

The *Bruiser* sped away towards the British line, which was now about three miles from the Russian. Almost at the same moment the *Sokol*, which had been lying on the other side of the *Navarin*, left her side and headed away at full speed to the south-eastward with the obvious intention of rounding the southern extremity of Inyack Island, slipping through the shallow water which covered the narrow channel between the island and the peninsula, and so getting to sea.

She was the fastest craft in the Russian navy, running a good thirty knots an hour. Once outside she would most likely trust to her heels for a successful dash up the Mozambique Channel to the nearest French telegraph station in Madagascar, and there give information of the doings of the British squadron. Possibly, too, she might fall in with a powerful French squadron which Admiral Tcherkov would have been very glad to believe actually in the proximity to Delagoa Bay that he had alleged it to be in.



Although the *Bruiser* kept on her way towards the *Majestic* this incident by no means passed unnoticed. The *Thrasher* had rejoined the squadron, and had taken up her station between the *Majestic* and the *Victorious*. Instantly her number fluttered from the signal-yard of the flagship with a string of variegated bunting below it.

Lieutenant Ferris, still standing on the platform of the telegraph house with his glasses fastened to his eyes, shut his teeth with a snap and muttered a hardly printable expression through them as he saw the signal which he had no need to be able to read. His instinct told him that it read:

"Chase *Sokol*. Capture or sink."

The next moment the *Thrasher* backed out from between the big battleships, stopped and turned, as it were, on her heel, till her nose pointed due south. Then, as if a powerful spring had been released behind her, she shot away towards the southern point of the island to, if possible, cut the *Sokol* off before she could double it and make for the passage.

According to the etiquette of civilised warfare the now inevitable battle could not begin until the *Bruiser* had delivered her message to the *Majestic*, and hauled down her white flag, so the two squadrons continued to approach each other with guns loaded and pointed until the black, wicked-looking little craft, as though exulting in her superior speed, took a wide sweep round the three battleships and ran in under the quarter of the *Majestic* with as much ease as though she had been laying at anchor instead of steaming her full seventeen knots through the water.

When Admiral Taylor Dale received the reckless defiance of the Russian Admiral, and heard the news of the threatened approach of the hypothetical friendly squadron, he shook his head with the gesture of a man who had just heard that another had decided to commit suicide.

There was, however, no question in his mind as to the task which lay before him, and if there had been any it would have been instantly removed by the sight of the red ensign flying from the flagstaff of the telegraph station, for that was the pre-arranged signal which told him that Lieutenant Ferris had sent to the Cape the news of the arrival of the squadron and the finding of the enemy, and had received the expected order to fight.

The importance of getting in the first blow was never so great as it is in modern naval warfare, and of this fact the

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British Admiral was fully aware. The three pairs of twelve-inch, fifty-ton guns in the forward barbettes of the *Majestic*, *Magnificent*, and *Victorious*, were already trained on to the *Navarin*. In point of range and striking power these guns are generally considered to be the most effective weapons afloat, and on this the first occasion on which they had been used in deadly earnest, they amply justified their reputation.

At two thousand yards they all spoke together, and the six huge shells found their mark on the devoted *Navarin* almost at the same instant.

The effect was as marvellous as it was frightful. The Russian flagship was for the moment enveloped in a cloud of mingled smoke and flame. A minute before she had been spick and span and perfect in every detail. A minute after she was a shattered wreck, rent and battered out of all recognition.

Almost at the same moment the cruisers, which had been swiftly closing in, opened fire with their 9·2in. guns at 3,000 yards range on the *Rurick* and the *Rossia*, which replied with their 8in. guns from the forward sponsons. The *Powerful* and *Terrible* devoted their attention to the *Rossia*, while the *Edgar* and *Endymion* tackled the *Rurick*.

The Russian cruisers were slower in speed and weaker in armament than the British, but they were armoured and their opponents were not. The British, therefore, taking advantage of their superior speed, kept away and pounded the Russians with their big guns, waiting until the battleships had disposed of the *Navarin* and the *Gangout*, after which there would naturally be nothing left for the Russian cruisers but the choice between sinking and surrender.

But that one terrible discharge from the big guns of the *Majestic*, *Magnificent*, and *Victorious* had not only begun the fight; it had, in fact, decided it. The commander of the *Gangout*, though every whit as brave a man as his admiral, was considerably more prudent, and when he saw his consort practically put out of action before she had fired a shot, he clearly recognised that to go on was merely to court certain destruction. His own guns were trained on the *Majestic*, and his finger was on the electric button, ready to transmit the spark which would have fired them, when to his horror he saw the *Navarin* lurch heavily to port, and begin to settle by the stern.

The two shells of the *Victorious* had happened to strike close together under her quarter, a few feet aft of the end of her armoured belt. They had penetrated and burst inside her inner skin, and one of the fragments had exploded a torpedo just as it was being placed in one of the after tubes.

No fabric made by human hands could have withstood the frightful energy of the combined explosions. A huge rent was torn in her quarter, her port screw-shaft was broken, and the torpedo-room was flooded in an instant.

The commander of the *Gangout* saw at a glance that she was doomed, and that the fight was now more hopeless than ever. A few brief moments of bitter reflection convinced him that there was only one course to be taken. He saw the *Majestic* heading straight for his crippled consort, pouring in a ceaseless storm of shot from her forward six-inch quick-firers, and evidently meaning to ram unless the Russian flagship struck. His own ship, too, was getting badly mauled under the combined fire of the *Victorious* and the *Majestic*, while she herself had not fired a shot.

All this had taken place during the few moments that he remained undecided whether to fight or strike. His indecision was, however, quickly ended by the sight of the *Navarin's* flag fluttering down in token of surrender. A moment or two more and the ram of the *Majestic* would have sent her to the bottom. He struck his own flag at once, and surrendered with the unfired charges still in his guns, and within fifteen minutes of the firing of the first shot.

The *Rurick* struck to the *Endymion* and the *Edgar* a few minutes later, hopelessly outmatched in speed and weight of metal. The *Rossia*, with her triple engines driving her three propellers at their utmost speed, made a desperate effort to pass between the *Terrible* and the *Grafton* and gain the open sea, but, though she was making nearly twenty knots, she was still one knot slower than the *Grafton* and three knots slower than the *Terrible*, and a very few minutes sufficed to convince her captain that there could be only one end to such a race.

There were the big cruisers in front of him, and the huge 15,000 ton battleships behind him. If he had possessed the twenty-two knots of the *Powerful* or the *Terrible* he might have got away, but the *Rossia's* best was only a fraction over nineteen knots. It was as impossible for him to run away as it was to fight, so down came his flag, too, and within half-an-hour of the firing of the first shot, the *Sokol* was the only craft of the Russian squadron that was not in possession of Admiral Taylor Dale.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Important Capture.

In the comparatively smooth water of the Bay the *Sokol* had an advantage of nearly half a knot over the *Thrasher*, and a few minutes run sufficed to convince Lieutenant Frank Stevens, who was commanding the British boat, *vice* Lieutenant Ferris, that, although the Russian had a little farther to go, he would get to the opening first. The boilers of both boats were throbbing under every ounce of steam that they would stand, and their thin steel sides seemed to palpitate like the flanks of a racing horse, and the flames that roared up through their funnels were palely visible even in the bright sunlight of the tropical morning.

The practicable channel even for boats like these, drawing under six feet of water, between the island and the peninsula was so narrow that the boat which reached it second would have to go through almost dead astern of the first, and this was a very serious matter.

The speed of the new type of destroyer is so great that the bow torpedo-tube has been abolished, simply because the torpedo cannot be fired ahead unless the boat slows to do it, since at full speed the boat would overtake the torpedo and blow herself up with it. Hence it will be plain that if the *Thrasher* entered the channel astern of the *Sokol* she would stand a chance of being torpedoed without being able to reply.

Lieutenant Stevens clearly foresaw this, and decided, as he put it to his engineer, to get there first or "bust," both

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He begun to implore Stevens to save his life, and let him go on shore as soon as possible.

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metaphorically and literally. The engineer nodded—there didn't seem time to say anything—and the stokers, if possible, worked harder than ever; but those on the *Sokol* were doing the same thing, and the two boats raced absolutely neck and neck for the narrow opening.

Unhappily, however, the *Sokol*, as will be seen from the sketch-map (published in last week's issue) had an almost straight course to steer, while the *Thrasher* had to make a turn to avoid the shoal to the south of the island, one touch on which would have ended the race and probably her own career. This, do what he would, made a difference of about a length to Lieutenant Stevens, and the Russian craft slipped in first.

He himself was steering in the conning-tower, and as the two boats were only a couple of hundred feet apart, and running almost exactly the same speed, he could see the slightest movement on the *Sokol's* deck as distinctly as though he had been standing on it. He saw the muzzle of one of the six-pounder quick firers which she carried aft sink slightly, and recognised the fact that the stream of shells, which, in another moment or so, would be pouring from its steel throat would rip the *Thrasher* open almost from stem to stern. There was only one thing to be done, and that at once.

"Ready with the twelve-pounder. Fire!" he shouted. "And keep it up."

The English gunner was just a moment or so quicker with his eyes and hands than the Russian, and so the English shell got home first. It hit the shield of the Russian gun, and smashed it out of shape. Almost at the same instant that it burst the Russian gunner fired, but that moment or two had been all sufficient. The *Sokol* dipped her stern ever so little on a swell that was coming in from the sea. The gunner had no time to correct his aim before he saw the flash from the English gun, and his first and only shell plunged into the water about a foot wide of the *Thrasher's* bow. The next instant he was a dead man and his gun disabled.

"Go for his funnels, Thwaites. You've got them in a dead straight line now. Ah, I thought so! Phew! that was a narrow squeak! Well done, Thwaites, that's stopped her."

Three things had happened almost simultaneously as he was speaking. A torpedo had leapt from the *Sokol's* after-tube into the water dead ahead of the *Thrasher*, Lieutenant

Stevens had ported his helm ever so little, and, as he put it afterwards, just squeezed in between shoal and Sheol—of which latter the torpedo would have formed a capable if transient representation if it had struck the *Thrasher's* bow instead of scraping along her side—and a couple of fast succeeding shells had torn two lines of jagged rents through the four funnels of the Russian boat.

As he spoke he took one hand off the wheel and sent a signal for half-speed to the engine-room. The *Thrasher* slowed down just in time to avoid running her bow into the *Sokol's* stern, but as she came up she received the fire of her two remaining six-pounders, which ripped her deck up in several places and injured her forward funnel rather badly.

But as she was able to bring three of her six-pounders, as well as her twelve-pounder, to reply to these, the argument was not of very long duration. The shells fired at such close quarters drilled clean holes wherever they struck, and after a few minutes' fire the *Sokol* was riddled and rent by scores of holes and gashes in her decks and sides, and was practically in a sinking condition.

The *Thrasher's* last word was a twelve-pound shell, which hit a torpedo that the Russian lieutenant was desperately trying to launch in a last effort to destroy his adversary, and very possibly himself, seeing how close the two craft were. A frightful explosion followed, stunning for the moment every man on board the *Thrasher*, hurling those who were standing on her decks prostrate, and flinging two of them into the sea.

As for the *Sokol*, her after-part seemed to shrivel up as far as the funnels, a great cloud of steam rushed out of the huge ragged rents in the portion which remained, and when Lieutenant Stevens came to himself, he was just in time to stop the *Thrasher* from running into the wreck which lay across the narrow channel in about seven feet of water.

"What a pity!" he said to himself. "I should like to have taken her back to the Bay at the end of a hawser. By Jove! that shook us up pretty well here. A few yards nearer, and we should all have gone to glory together. Poor old Ferris! Won't he be mad when I tell him what he's missed. I wonder if there's anybody alive on board her? We seem to have suffered pretty badly, too."

This was the fact. Poor Gunner Thwaites and his two assistants were lying terribly mangled beside the gun they had used so well; nearly a score of others were more or less badly wounded by the close and rapid shell-fire; and the two men who had been flung senseless overboard had been drowned. The boat was badly knocked about, but fortunately chiefly as to her deck and upper works. Her engines were untouched, and none of the holes or rents in her sides were near the water line.

Lieutenant Stevens had the dinghy lowered, and made a careful personal search of the wreck. Only about a dozen or so of her crew remained alive, and every one of these was either scalded, or badly wounded, or both, with the exception of a man in civilian clothes, who with white face and shaking limbs crawled up out of the fore peak where he had evidently been hiding during the brief running fight, in answer to his repeated hail of inquiry for any more who might be alive on board the wreck.

He scrambled crab fashion along the steeply-tilted deck, and began to implore Stevens to save his life, and let him go on shore as soon as possible as he had most important business to transact. He had evidently been terribly frightened, and, seeing this, the Lieutenant said to him kindly:

"Your life is in no danger, sir. We English don't murder our prisoners, you know; but going ashore is another matter. I'm afraid you'll have to come with me aboard the flagship and get the Admiral's permission first. By-the-way, it's curious you should have important business on shore and yet be in such a tremendous hurry to get away from it, as you were just now. I expect the Admiral will want to know what you, as a civilian, had to do on board a torpedo-boat destroyer, trying to run the gauntlet. Oblige me by getting into the boat."

While he was speaking the Lieutenant's suspicions had been growing. The man spoke English perfectly, but was evidently a Russian—in fact, he spoke it as few foreigners save a Russian could have done—and his eager request to be allowed to go on shore a few minutes after he had been doing his best to escape by sea seemed as suspicious, on

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second thoughts, as it had sounded ludicrous in the first instance.

It was quite possible that the man was an agent of the Russian Government, and that the *Sokol* had been especially dispatched to get him out of the way. If this was the case, it was on the cards that he might have papers of importance in his possession. Lieutenant Frank Stevens, though a thoroughly practical sailor and most promising young officer, had a spice of romance in his nature, and the idea of making a capture which might result in exposing some of the secret machinations of the wilest enemy England had ever had was by no means unpleasing to him.

He gave the prisoner in charge of a quartermaster with instructions to take him to his own cabin. He then told a couple of his men to go down into the fore-peak and make a careful search. As soon as the prisoner heard this an exclamation in Russian, that sounded very like an oath, broke from his lips, and his face, which had begun to regain its colour, turned white again.

"There is nothing there, sir, I assure you," he said to the Lieutenant with needless emphasis. "Nothing but my own private property, which I presume honourable enemies such as you will hold sacred. I am not a combatant, I am a private individual. I was only given a passage on the *Sokol* by the Admiral's favour."

"Where to?" said the Lieutenant abruptly, looking him straight in the eyes.

"To—to—well, to the nearest friendly port at which I could be landed from whence I could go about my business—my own business, of course."

"I'm afraid Mr.—Mr.—by-the-way we have not introduced ourselves yet. I am Lieutenant Stevens, second in command of Her Majesty's ship *Thrasher*. May I ask your name?"

The Lieutenant spoke very politely but with just a touch of irony in his tone.

"My name is—Peter Spiridoff, sir, at your service," the prisoner replied with just the slightest perceptible pause after the "is." "I regret that my passport and personal papers were in a portmanteau in a cabin at that end of the vessel which was destroyed by the explosion. *Ach douraki!*"

As it happened Lieutenant Stevens knew just enough Russian to know that this last word was the equivalent of the English monosyllable "fool," preceded by a familiar but unprintable adjective, and for the moment he so far forgot his manners as to laugh outright at his prisoners' discomfiture which was obviously caused by the reappearance of the two men who had been sent to search.

One of them carried a yellow leather dispatch case, on the side of which were boldly painted in black the initials "M.O." The Lieutenant took it from the sailor and looked at it. He noted that it was heavily weighted like a ship's private signal book—probably for the same purpose, to be sunk in case of need.

"Ah, Mr. Peter Spiridoff," he said pleasantly to his prisoner, "this is evidently not yours then. I suppose it belonged to one of the poor fellows who will have no further use for it; possibly you were taking care of it for him in your place of safety. Well, there can be no harm in my taking charge of it at any rate. Now we'd better be getting back on board. After you, Mr. Spiridoff."

Mr. Michael Ostroff had by this time quite recovered from the physical terror which had made him commit in the last few minutes more mistakes than he had made in all the forty odd years of his life before, and in its place he became suddenly possessed by a paroxysm of rage. He had forgotten to destroy or effectively conceal the priceless papers which his dispatch case contained. He had lied about the case itself, and given a false name which prevented him even claiming it.

There was just one chance of redeeming his terrible error. He made a sudden dash at the Lieutenant, tore the case from his hands, and was in the act of flinging it into the sea, when one of the bluejackets grabbed him by the arm and gave it a twist which sent him to his knees, while the other deftly caught the case as it left his hand.

Within five minutes he was securely handcuffed in Lieutenant Stevens' cabin, "foaming at the mouth in double Dutch," as Seaman-Gunner Tom Smith afterwards put it in the forecastle.

The survivors of the *Sokol's* crew were carefully taken on board the *Thrasher*, and then she backed out of the narrow channel, and ran back to the squadron at little more than half the speed she had made during the chase. She was met by the *Boxer*, *Bruiser*, and the *Ardent*, which had been sent to learn the cause of the explosion, which had taken place out of sight of the warships behind the island, and escorted in triumph back to the side of the *Majestic*.

Lieutenant Stevens at once went on board with his prisoner and the dispatch case, and made his report to the Admiral. The Admiral thanked him warmly, ending up with the significant hint at the possible command of the boat that would replace the *Thrasher* while she was undergoing repairs. Then he took possession of the despatch case and sent its owner to the guard-room between two marines.

He opened the case alone in his private room, and for nearly an hour the sentry outside the locked door acted on his express orders, and turned away all applicants for admission, no matter what their rank and or business. He came out looking a good five years older than when he had gone in. He had the look, too, of a man upon whose shoulders the weight of an unexpected and tremendous responsibility had suddenly fallen.

He asked the first midshipman he met on deck where the Flag-Captain was. The middy saluted, and told him he was on the bridge. This the Admiral might have seen for himself at a glance, but, as the Eastern saying has it, "his eyes were turned inward" at the time. He looked up and went straight to the bridge, taking no notice of anyone he passed.

"Barrow," he said, "I've learnt some very grave news. Let all the Russian prisoners be placed as rapidly as possible on board the merchant ships in the bay. Every English sailor, seaman, officer, engineer, or stoker, must, if possible, be got to volunteer for the fleet before midday. All the refitting that can be done at sea must be pushed on as rapidly as possible; but, first of all, signal for all the flag-captains and senior commanders of the squadron to meet in my room in a quarter of an hour."

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT THE WAR.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of Edgar Jepson's "Keepers of the People," to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. R. A. H. Goodyear, of Tune Street, Barnsley, Yorks. Attempts for this week's prize should deal with WAR ANECDOTES and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, March 12th. Post-cards only, please.

The Boers were Dwindling.

"WILLIAMS is a real good fellow at heart, but his belief in himself is abnormal," said a clerk in a big Yorkshire office.

"Being a First-class Reserve man, he was called to the front early, and bragged so much about what he meant doing to the Boers that we all turned pretty sick, and had hard work to keep from kicking him.

"However, we gave him a loyal send off, and waited to hear what he would say about the actual fighting. His first letter came to hand yesterday, and this is all it contained:

"'Dear Pal,—Tell the chaps I shall soon be at my desk again. I'm in fine form, and the Boers are dwindling fast. There'll be nothing left of them in a week if my regiment backs me up.'"

R. A. H. G.

Charity Rewarded.

Two military chaplains, on their way home on a dark night, came upon a soldier lying in the gutter, helplessly intoxicated.

By mutual consent they agreed to see the man home, so they extricated him from the gutter, and, finding out his barracks, walked him off to his room in an apparently affectionate manner.

On arriving at the door, the good-natured clergymen hesitated, but, not desiring to do things by halves, one of them boldly lifted the latch and walked in.

The man, who had somewhat recovered, thanked his benefactors, then, turning towards his comrades in a dreamy sort of way, and jerking his thumb towards the chaplains, he exclaimed:

"My chums of the Rose and Crown!"

J. E.

Didn't Obey Orders.

SERGEANT MALONEY was drilling a squad of recruits.

"When I give the order 'Right legs up' every one of ye put the right leg up together, not one man after the other.

"Right legs up."

One of the recruits by mistake put his left leg up at the command.

Sergeant Maloney retires to the end of the line to inspect them.

In a moment the sergeant roared out with rage:

"What blithering spalpeen is it that's put both legs up?"

E. W. D.

International Disaster.

A GENTLEMAN in Natal invited some friends to dinner, and, as the coloured servant entered the room, he accidentally dropped a platter which held a turkey.

"My friends," said the gentleman in a most impressive tone, "never in my life have I witnessed an event so fraught with disaster to the various nations of the globe. In this calamity, we see the downfall of Turkey, the upsetting of Greece, the destruction of China, and the humiliation of Africa."

M. D. K.

The Irish of It.

THE other night a soldier of an Irish Fusilier regiment took his sweetheart to see *Cheer, Boys, Cheer* in a provincial theatre.

The woman saw a soldier near her dressed in the Highland uniform, and particularly took notice of the regimental badge on his cap and collar.

The badge is the figure and cross of St. Andrew, with the motto, "*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" Translated it means, "No one strikes me with impunity."

"Denis, wat does the writin' mane?" asked the woman.

"Shure," replied Denis, "it's Latin, but Oi've forgotten the maneing in English. But in Oirish it manes 'Tread on the tail ov me coat if ye dare!'"

A. A. H.

He Would Wrastle.

DEAN HOLE was once presiding at an agricultural dinner given to the men of his parish, among whom were a great many clod-hoppers, principally noted for heavy stolid looks, and a capacity for drinking huge cans of ale. The Dean had a quarter of lamb set before him to carve, which he proceeded to do by cutting off the shoulder and placing it on a plate to his left hand. A farm labourer sat next to the dean, and quietly surveyed this proceeding with a widely-opened mouth, and large incredulous eyes.

When the plate was put down, Hodge leaned both elbows on the table and surveyed the meat for quite two minutes' duration. Then he pulled the plate closer, leaning his face on one side, and gave a grunt of satisfaction. Then he shook his head and put his tongue in his cheek, as if rather perplexed. He evidently thought the meat was intended for him.

At last he gave a large guffaw, and pulling the plate quite in front of him, said, with a broad grin, as he looked into Dean Hole's face:

"Well, meester, it's a biggish bit; but I'll wrastle wi' it."

M. C.

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Not the Right Brand.

The mails from home had just been received by a certain regiment which forms part of Buller's force. Not only were there letters, but many parcels from relatives and friends at home for certain lucky soldiers.

One of the Tommies received a large box addressed to himself, and with a triumphant yell he rushed off to his company's lines and gathered them around him to share in the contents of his box.

"Smokes, lads!" he cried gloatingly, as he undid the wrappings. "From the old man. I knows it. An' there's sure to be a bottle or two of Scotch."

He opened the box, gave one look at its contents, and collapsed in a heap.

"What is it?" cried his comrades, pressing round.

"It's from ole Auntie Mary," groaned the disappointed warrior. "Bandages, an' ointment, an' embrocation, an' splints, an' a book on ''Ow to be Yer Own Surgin'!" W. J. D.

Ladies First.

Little Tommy and his younger sister were going to bed without a light. They had just reached the bottom of the stairs when Tommy, after vainly endeavouring to pierce the darkness, turned round and asked:

"Ma, is it polite for a gentleman to precede a lady when they have to walk in single file?"

"No, my son," replied his mother; "the lady should always take the lead."

"I thought so," said Tommy delightedly; "go ahead, Sue." P. S. A.

Nothing Extraordinary.

One of the stock of ancient legends relating to the Rock of Gibraltar, from which the passing griffs were formerly regaled, relates how a young Scotch subaltern was on guard with a brother officer, when the latter, in visiting the sentries, fell over a precipice and was killed.

When the survivor was relieved from duty, he made the customary written report in the usual form, "Nothing extraordinary." And this brought the brigade major down upon him in a rage.

"What! When your brother officer on duty with you has fallen down a precipice four hundred feet high and been killed, you reported 'nothing extraordinary.'"

"Weel, sir," replied the Scot, calmly, "I dinna think there's onything extraordinary in it ava. If he had fallen doon four hundred feet and not been killed—well, I should hae ca'd that extraornery." E. W.

Taken Over His Beat.

Here is a story concerning the examination of a young man who wished to be appointed a county police constable. He put in an appearance one morning accompanied by his mother, and was taken in hand for examination by the inspector. This progressed satisfactorily until the inspector observed:

"Of course you are aware you'll have a lot of night work to do? You are not afraid of being out late, I suppose?"

Before the candidate could reply, his mother electrified the official with the statement:

"That'll be all right, sir, never fear; his grandmother's going round with him the first two or three nights until he gets used to it." F. T.

An "Only Orphint," Too.

He had a bundle of papers under his arm, and was standing near the railway station, weeping.

"What is the matter, little boy?" asked a pleasant-faced gentleman.

"If I go home without selling me papers me feyther and mother will bate the life out of me, they will."

"That's bad."

"Yes, sir, and the worst of it is that I am an only orphint."

"Yes," replied the philanthropist, allowing a coin to drop back into his pocket, "only it doesn't often happen that a boy has such bad luck." W. A.

Certainly.

It is not often said that a youth takes his seat or suddenly as the one of whom we are about to speak, as keeps it as persistently. He was the keenest boy in the class, and when an unpopular professor said:

"Gentlemen, your next subject for composition will be manners," he at once rose and asked, "Can we write on bad manners, sir?"

The professor looked over his spectacles at the all-conquering youth, and quietly answered:

"Certainly. You can write about whatever you are best acquainted with." A. T. H.

He'd Seek Cover.

A staff sergeant at Aldershot was instructing a squad of recruits in the use of the rifle. He had been explaining to them the course taken by a bullet when fired at an object some distance away.

"Now, Private Murphy," he said, turning to one of the rear rank men, "you seem to be doing everything except looking to your front and paying attention. Perhaps you'll answer me a few questions. Suppose I was standing a thousand yards away by yonder farmhouse, and a body of men were firing at me from here, and you were half way between us, what would happen to you?"

Private Murphy: "The bullets would pass over my head, sergeant."

"Quite right; and what would happen to me?"

Private Murphy: "I hardly know, sergeant. I'm afraid ye'd get dodging behind the house."

H. S.

He Did a Bit of Painting.

In one of the courts on a certain occasion a youth was engaged in making some sketches for an illustrated paper, and behind him stood a burly gentleman, who might have been taken for a county magistrate.

The latter watched the young artist for a while, and then, touching him on the shoulder, ventured to observe that this and that and the other points of the sketch were not exactly what they should be. The artist simply replied by inquiring, "What do you know about it?"

The gentleman persisted in kindly and persuasive criticism.

At length the youth, convinced that, after all, the criticism was just—indeed, the gentleman had himself taken the drawing-block and made the necessary alterations with his own hand—remarked:

"Well, you do seem to know something about it, certainly," adding, "Are you on any paper?"

"No," answered the gentleman, "I am not on any paper, but I do a bit of painting now and then. My name is John Millais." H. R. G.

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"SEND Sergeant Lester to me, Jones."

"Yessir."

The orderly glided from the tent and summoned Sergeant Lester who was enjoying a doze with his water-pouch for a pillow. He followed the orderly to the Colonel's tent, and then stood awaiting orders.

"You know the language of the Taal, do you not, my man?" asked the white-haired officer slowly, as he gazed at the man keenly.

"Very well indeed, sir."

"So I was given to understand by your commanding officer. Well, Lester, I have a mission for you which will require a little diplomacy and a good deal of courage. The mission is just this. You are to penetrate the camp on the north side of Ladysmith, and endeavour to find out when the enemy intend resuming their attack, and from what quarter it will come. Have you the necessary clothing?"

"I can easily obtain it, sir."

The sergeant's face flushed a little—and his eyes grew bright. The mission was dangerous—and that fact alone commended it to him—and if he was successful, promotion would doubtless follow when the campaign was ended—and there was a certain dark-eyed girl far away in Dover whose heart would throb with delight when she read in his letter of what he had done, and how he had been selected for a prominent undertaking in the Secret Service.

The Colonel shook hands with the man, wished him success, and then dismissed him, muttering as he went:

"He'll do it, if it is to be done."

Late that night, a man, dressed in the rough clothing of the Boer peasant soldier, took his place round the camp fire three miles north of Ladysmith, and chatted gaily with the Boers scattered there. The man was Sergeant Lester, and, seeing that he spoke the Taal (or Boer language) like a native, no suspicions were aroused by his appearance.

A smoking concert on a somewhat primitive scale was organised by a field cornet, who began proceedings by singing a song in a harsh, discordant tone. In order to make himself agreeable, Lester sang, and all went well.

Long before the camp settled down to sleep, the intrepid soldier had discovered what he wanted to know, and he was about to set out for the British encampment, when a rough hand was placed on his shoulder.

"You are leaving just as the sport is commencing, friend," said the owner of the hand, "the best is yet to come."

Wondering what the "best" might be, Lester allowed himself to be drawn into the crowd. A Boer then appeared bearing in his hand a huge picture of Queen Victoria, at the sight of which the men roared out cries of anger.

Lester set his teeth hard, guessing that some insult was about to be placed upon the Queen, but he told himself that whatever came, he must preserve his self-control, for if he betrayed his nationality, his life would be imperilled, and worse than that, his mission would be cancelled.

First of all the Boers ranged themselves round the picture and sang their national song in lusty chorus. Then a specially written verse, sung to the tune of "God Save the Queen," but expressing very different sentiments, was sung—but Lester kept silence, telling himself he could serve his Queen better by allowing the jeers to go unrebuked than by giving vent to his very natural feelings.

But worse was still to come, for a young Boer calmly walked towards the picture of our revered Queen and trampled upon it, every man in the room save Lester following his example. He held back.

"Why you hesitate?" asked one, hitting him roughly on the shoulder, "why you not do as we do?"

He cast about him for the first excuse, his blood on fire.

"She is a woman," he said—"even though she is Queen of the rooineks—she is a woman—and I cannot bring myself to do what you have done."

Some of the men laughed—and he heard a whisper go round the crowd that a similar ceremony would be performed on the following evening. When these words fell upon Lester's ears, his face changed—and his lips stiffened with resolution.

Night merged into the red dawn of the South African sky, and Sergeant Lester was within the British lines once more safe and sound.

"Well, sergeant?" It was the Colonel who spoke. "Well, sergeant, what news?"

"Capital, sir. I have discovered all that you wanted to know."

"Good, man!"

The Colonel, with an approving glance, listened attentively as the sergeant in concise soldierly manner confided to him what he had learnt in the Boer camp. He related every detail truthfully, concealing one thing only, the incident of the picture.

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"You have done your duty, and more than your duty," said the Colonel when the recital was finished. "I congratulate you, Sergeant Lester, and you may rely that your assistance on this occasion will not be overlooked. You can now go and report yourself to your commanding officer. Good-morning."

With a smile upon his face, Lester obeyed, and then very quietly he went to his kit-bag and took from it a sheet of paper and an envelope. He wrote a letter, very short and very simple, to a certain girl at Dover—telling her that he did not think it probable they would ever meet again, but that she must try and not mind very much.

"Last night," the note ran: "I undertook a mission for Queen and country. To-night I'm undertaking another mission for Queen alone—and somehow I don't think I shall come back."

Then with a firm hand, he signed the letter "Your loving George," wrote the address, and dropped it into the box.

"And now," he said grimly, "for work."

* * * * *

Everything was exactly the same as the night before as Sergeant Lester sat down beside the Boer camp-fire, and he was hailed with mirth.

"He has sprung from the bottom of a kopje," said one fat burgher as he filled his pipe, and then puffed away placidly.

"Or rather from a visit to England," said another with a huge grin, "where he has been paying his compliments to the Englishmen's queen."

A roar of laughter went round the fire, but Lester said nothing. He lit his pipe and smoked in silence, until the concert began, and to-night he refused to sing.

"Sullen pig," cried one man, as he prodded him with his rifle, "keep silent then, and I myself will show you how a song should be sung."

Then rising he proceeded to grunt out a few bars of a coarse ditty, but it evoked small enthusiasm until a brutal reference to Queen Victoria was made. A cheer went up, and the picture was produced as upon the previous evening. Once again the disgusting process was gone through—and once again Lester was directed to do as the others did.

To-night, however, he did not remain silent. Drawing himself up to his full height, he snatched the picture of his Sovereign from the stout Boer who held it, and with one well directed blow stretched the ruffian at his feet.

A roar of anger rose from the others, and in a moment Lester was surrounded, but he stuck to the picture, and each man that endeavoured to wrest it from his grasp received a token of a powerful British fist in the shape of a damaged eye or a broken nose. Never was summary vengeance for an insult dealt out so speedily as it was dealt out to them—but alas, the business was one-sided enough—and within five minutes of the first blow, Lester was lying bound, bruised and helpless on the veldt.

"He is an accursed rooinek," said one of the men hoarsely, and then addressing Lester he asked:

"Can you deny that?"

"Deny it," he cried, "no, I own it, and I am glad to own it. Last night I was obliged to stand by and allow your dirty tricks to continue—but to-night things are different, and I fancy that I've shown you my opinion of your conduct."

The burghers held a hasty consultation among themselves. Some were for shooting Lester then and there, others wished to hang him, others again proposed that a dose of the sambok should be dealt out to him.

The council was interrupted by the arrival of a horseman.

It was the commandant, and in three minutes' time he had taken in the situation.

"Unbind the rooinek," he said sternly, "and let him speak."

The order was obeyed. Lester rose and faced the commandant steadily.

"Why have you come here?" asked the Boer officer coldly.

"To avenge an insult offered to my Queen!"

"You are an Englishman, then?"

"Thank Heaven I am!"

The commandant laughed brutally.

"I hear you were in this camp last night," he said, "and your presence was due no doubt to a desire to obtain information of our movements. Well, it is wartime, and we make short work of spies. Take him out and shoot him," he said carelessly, as he turned away, and then catching sight of Lester's calm and resigned features, he asked: "Have you anything to say?"

Lester smiled.

"Only, 'God Save the Queen,'" he answered firmly.

* * * * *

Two days later, by reason of the information brought by Sergeant Lester, the Boers were utterly routed in a victory which has since become famous, but among the names of dead and missing men flashed over the cables to the home country, was the name of one we know, and beside it was written the word "Missing."

The message was correct, for Sergeant Lester had gone to join the band of heroes that had passed before him in the service of the country of their birth and the Queen whom they loved. To no man, peer or peasant, is given a more worthy death.

P. Beaufoy.

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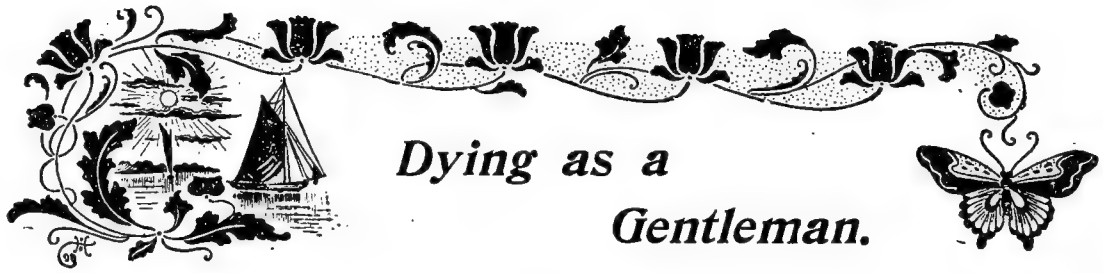

Dying as a Gentleman.

A DOZEN men sat around a camp-fire alongside the trail which led from Hope Valley to Woona-Walla. The trail was three hundred miles long, and ran uphill and down, over plain and through scrub, and now and then crossed a river or climbed a mountain.

The feet of three thousand Australian gold-hunters, accompanied for half the distance by waggons and pack-horses, had left such a plain road behind that the next three thousand could not go astray.

At no point on the trail could a dozen worse men have been picked out than the twelve who sat around Jim Agnew's camp-fire. They had banded together because they were bad. Had they travelled singly they would have fared badly at the hands of the crowd.

At nine o'clock at night, with every man ripe for mischief from the liquor he had imbibed, the camp had a caller—two of them. A man turned in from the trail and passed the fire and halted in the midst of the quarrelling gang and dropped a burden from his back.

It was a little girl seven or eight years old, and sound asleep. He pulled a blanket from under a man and spread it out to make a bed for the child, and he tucked her up with tender hand before he straightened up and looked about him and said:

"I carried her on my back from Sidney to Hope Valley, and finding the rush on I'm bound for Woona-Walla."

"And who may you be?" queried Jim Agnew of the stranger.

"A gentleman, sir, or the wreck of a gentleman," was the reply. "You call me Scott."

"And is this your child?"

"No, sir. Daughter of my ex-partner, Mr. Joe Taylor. He was another wreck of a gentleman. She was motherless, and when he died a few weeks ago he left her in my charge. Couldn't refuse to take her, sir—no gentleman could. Very interesting young person; bound to make a lady if properly reared and educated. She'll be waking up directly, and then we'll thank you for a bite to eat."

It was bearding the lion in his den. After two or three minutes the men recovered from their feeling of astonishment, and then there was resentment at the cool and nervy way their camp had been invaded. The man before them was ragged and unkempt, and dissipation was to be read in every line of his face, but yet instinct told them that he was not of their ilk. No matter what he was now, he had one day been a gentleman. There were mutterings and threats and presently Jim Agnew said:

"Say, I've heard of you! You are Scott, the gambler. You used to hang out at Red Hills."

"Your information is correct, sir. I used to be a gentleman. Then I was Scott, the gambler. At present I am Scott, the wreck of a gentleman and guardian of that child. Quite correct, sir."

"Hang your gentleman business!" shouted Jim as his temper began to boil up. "Say, boys, let's chip in and buy the kid. Mebbe she'll bring more luck than a humpback."

"Yes, let's buy the kid!" shouted half-a-dozen men in chorus.

"Gentleman," said the gambler, as he waved his hand towards the girl, who had been awakened by the shouts, "permit me to introduce Miss Ethel Taylor of Sydney, daughter of Mr. Joseph Taylor deceased, ex-convict, gambler, sharper, and bad 'un generally. In dying he left her in charge of his partner, the wreck of a gentleman who has now been a day and a half without food, but who wouldn't sell out his trust for all the gold in Australia."

"You'd better take a walk!" exclaimed Agnew after a long look at the gambler.

"After the girl has eaten, sir," was the quiet reply.

"The girl stays here."

"Not unless I am dead."

The man Agnew backed off a few feet and pulled a revolver from his belt and raised his arm until the muzzle was on a line with the gambler's right eye. The arm rested there, and as his fingers curled around the trigger he said:

"I'll give ye 'till I count five."

"My dear Ethel, good night and good-bye!" said Scott, as he half-turned and lifted his ragged cap to the girl.

She did not rise up nor call out. Agnew meant to kill the man before him if he did not move off, but after his words to the girl his arm slowly fell. There was silence for a minute, and then the boss of the gang said:

"Hang me, but you've got nerve! Sit down with the gal and fill up."

It was accounted a strange thing with the "rushers" to see a little girl among that band of "bad 'uns," each taking turn and turn about to carry her on his back, and both guardian and ward found themselves among friends. Indeed, before the new diggings were reached Jim Agnew and Scott were accounted "partners." It was stranger yet that little Ethel had a liking for Jim. He stood next to her guardian.

At Woona-Walla the child shared the tent or shanty with the two men. Child though she was, Scott treated her with almost as much formality as if she had been a girl of twenty. Agnew treated her as a child, and though his ways were rough and his speech shocked her at times, he won her heart more than the other.

Disappointment awaited hundreds of the rushers to Woona-Walla. One night, tired and discouraged, the two men sat smoking their pipes in silence for an hour, while the child played about or watched them and wondered if they had quarrelled.

By and by Scott looked up quietly and said:

"Jim, we are downed here."

"For sure," was the reply.

"Let's move on."

"Where?"

"Up the creek—down—over the hills—anywhere for

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her sake. I'm down to stay down, and the end is not far away, but I'd like to make a stake for her."

In the grey of the morning they took their way over the hills, one carrying the packs and the other the girl. Fifty miles away, on the banks of Brawling Creek, they made a camp, and two hours later were prospecting for gold. They found sufficient to encourage them to persevere, but not in quantities to rejoice over.

On the third day, the men left the girl asleep and moved further down the creek. She awoke and went searching for them upstream. She had walked for a quarter of a mile, calling as she went, when in trying to clamber up a bank she caught at and uprooted a bush. With the dirt and stones a nugget of gold rolled down into the stream and lay there like a spot of sunshine. An hour later Scott threw down his pick and said:

"Jim it's the richest spot on the face of the globe! There'll be a rush here of course, but we'll have our claims entered first. I'll start for Woona-Walla within half-an-hour."

In thirty minutes he was on his way over the hills, and in three days he was back again. It would have been no use to try to hide the new find. He had to state its location in order to file his claim, and the very official who made good his papers was at his heels as he made his way back to camp.

"I've got it," he said to his partner, after picking up the girl and kissing her. "Here it is—the 'Ethel Claim.' There'll be enough for both of you—aye! enough to make a dozen men rich!"

After supper that night the child climbed upon Scott's knee, and he stroked her hair until she fell asleep. For a long time after he had gently laid her down there was silence between the two men. He was the first to break it by saying:

"Jim, the girl is to go back to Sydney and be brought up a lady."

"Yes," replied Jim.

"Deal square with her and give her half."

"For sure, but where do you come in?"

Scott sat in the door of the shanty with his face upturned to the full moon. It was three or four minutes before he replied:

"Jim, you can't understand."

"But we've got gold—barrels of gold!"

"And I'm an old man—a drunkard, a gambler, a swindler, a wreck. Money could only bring new vices—new degradations. Can you understand?"

"No, hanged if I can."

"But you were not born and reared a gentleman. I wanted to make a stake for the girl. I've made it."

"And now what?" asked Jim.

Scott knelt down beside the sleeping child and kissed her. When he arose he held out his hand to his partner and said:

"Good bye, old man—give her a square divide."

"And you—you—?"

"Hush! Don't wake her!"

He passed out into the moonlight and up to the creek. Next morning they found his dead body half a mile beyond the last camp fire.

"Yes, he was my partner," said Jim as they called him to look at the dead man.

"And why did he kill himself?"

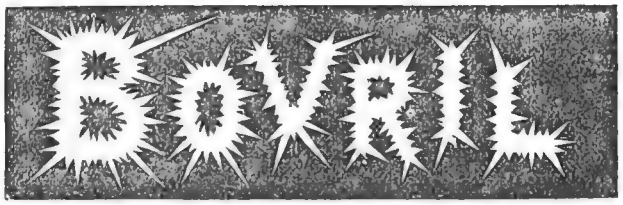
"Because he couldn't forget that he was once a gentleman."

M. Quad.

On the Field of Battle

Bovril is playing a conspicuous part in upholding the British flag and contributing to the success of British valour. Sir Wm. MacCormac writes to the *Lancet* after the battle of Tugela:

"As each wounded man reached "the hospital he was served with a "hot cup of bovril, large cans of "which were boiling outside the "tents."



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AN AFRICAN LOVER.

THEY didn't care much for Dahome; he was a sacrilegious being. To him the "Image" had no beauty; it was only a thing of stone. And as for sacred power, he, in his own degenerate mind imagined that he could create more happiness and good feeling by human acts of kindness. In the village he was considered a loafer.

To pass down the opening between the huts, which did service for a street, and see Dahome stretched out at full length on a mat, that at the time of his retiring was in the shade, snoring as only a vagrant can snore, was no more than could be seen three hundred and sixty-five days of the year; and, as was his custom in his country, his dark skin being generously rubbed with grease, and a herb that perfumed the said grease, the flies that shared the occupancy of the village found a very comfortable and remunerative oasis to camp upon.

It was just before one of these fractional relaxations that Dahome conceived a plan whereby he would gain a few hours pleasure and at the same time compel a certain family in the village to testify, upon the sacred image, that he was not entirely a heartless vagabond.

Of course there was an object. Dahome, though a loafer and a vagabond, had concealed beneath his tough black skin a heart as red, and as liable to be pierced by the arrows of the little black angel as the Great Chief who owned the hut opposite the temple, and who had many weed bags full of the brightest stones and shells.

The Object was the only daughter of a widow who had lost her husband in a war between the local warriors and the fighting men of a village four days distant, and who at present occupied a hut on the outskirts of the circle. This hut had been deserted by the former occupants on account of the close proximity to a stream, where, it is said, a lion was wont to come to quench his thirst after the night's dissipation.

Now, this lion was an obstinate beast, since he refused to be captured, and positively declined to be exterminated by the bands of hunters that ventured forth, very foolishly, to wreak vengeance on his majesty, but turning the tables, very often hunted the hunters. When the lion took this very foolish idea into his obstinate brain, one, and sometimes more than one of these sanguine huntsmen never came back. Then there was weeping and wailing.

Dahome, lying on his broad back, thought of his long-lamented father, and how, when just gaining man's estate, that proud, big warrior had taught his only son the valuable use of the javelin.

Night after night they would steal down to the stream and wait for the game to appear, and, at last, when a fine large buck came to take his drink, Dahome's father had grasped him by the arm and told him to "throw."

Ah, how his heart beat. Thump! thump! thump! He was afraid the buck would hear it and escape. Then how his fingers grasped the long tough shaft of his weapon. He tried to give it the proper poise, but somehow or other it would not balance.

Someone surely must have been tampering with it while it was lying in the sun to season. Well, he must throw at all events, for had not the buck nearly finished?

Raising it to the desired position, with the full strength of his young muscular arm, he threw and closed his eyes. What was that snort and crackling noise? And what was that disturbance by his side?

Perhaps he had missed, and the buck seeing him throw had decided to take revenge for the attack.

Whir-r-r! Why, that sounded like another javelin whistling through the air. Taking courage, Dahome opened his eyes, and, behold, there was his father, on the other side of the brook, bending over the carcase of the dead buck.

Picking his way across the stream, though with a very sheepish expression, Dahome learnt that his javelin had done no damage more than scare the buck. But his experienced father's had brought him down before he had gone half a heavy stone's throw.

But now matters were different. Though he was known as the village loafer, every afternoon, as the sun reached a certain stick, set there for that purpose, and until it had left half the hut in shadow, Dahome could be seen throwing his spear and flint knives at a target rigged some distance off. And as for hunting, well, no one in the village could supply the larder in as short a time as Dahome.

Reflecting on all occurrences, and planning his *grand coup*, was more than Dahome could endure. It was noticeable that he slept longer and more soundly than usual that day. So noticeable, in fact, that one of his neighbours, passing after the night was well set in, was kind enough to poke him in the ribs with a spear, and tell him that he had overslept himself. What a foolish remark! Didn't Dahome know very well that he had slept longer than was his wont? And then, again, what business was it of his neighbours whether he slept long, or did not sleep at all?

Reluctantly rising from his mat, and rubbing his greasy eyes with his more greasy knuckles, he growlingly went into the hut to prepare supper, only to find that through his laziness there was nothing in the place fit to eat. And, oh, he was so hungry! Well, there was only one thing to do, and that was to take his trusty spear and see if he couldn't bag some kind of game to sustain life until to-morrow. Acting as the cravings of hunger directed, he started out into the moonlight in search of his evening meal.

'Twas strange that he should find himself in front of a certain hut on the extreme outer edge of the circle, when he could have gone in the opposite direction from his abode, and with a better chance to secure game. But, nevertheless, there he was, and no game over his shoulder.

But what was that movement in yonder clump of trees? At last here is a chance for supper. Throwing himself on the ground at full length, Dahome crawled towards the tree. When within easy throwing distance, and while preparing his javelin, a soft purring sound which gradually swelled into a plaintive love chant, floated from the clump of trees, and presently there stepped out, in all the beauty of her youth—by the thirteenth arm of the Image—the Object.

How beautiful she is! Her ebony skin reflects the moonbeams, and as she moves they strike at her, only to be parried and thrown off into space. Her beautiful hair is done up in one knot, on the top of her head, and

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A STRAWBERRY PICNIC.

The *Morning Leader*, July 13th, 1898, says:—"Messrs. S. Chivers & Sons, "the well-known jam and jelly manu- "facturers, understand the art of "entertainment no less than the art of "jam-making. On Tuesday they "invited a number of Pressmen to a "strawberry picnic at their farm at "Histon, Cambridge. The wondering "pickers were delighted with the sight "of two-score top-hatted visitors "bending their backs to the willing "task of finding large strawberries. "It is just twenty-five years since "Messrs. Chivers started jam-making. "They now have a thousand acres of "land under cultivation, and employ. "when busy, eight hundred hands. "The jam factory is within the circle "of the fruit fields, and the fruit can "therefore be handled without delay."

At the luncheon which followed, a Cambridge Alderman and J.P. said:— "When he was shown over the factory "a year ago he was struck by the "healthy appearance of the employés, "the women and girls looking well and "joyous, so different from the condi- "tion of things in some factories he "had visited."

A London manufacturer expressed the opinion that the root of Messrs. Chivers' "success was the high excel- "lence of their goods, which had made "their mark in the commercial world. "People who had the goods once, "repeated their orders."

The Official Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1895, says:—"Messrs. Chivers' factory at Histon "is now well-known throughout the "country for the excellence of its "manufactures."

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resplendent with various coloured grasses; and in her nose the dearest little tusk that ever came out of an animal's mouth. How Dahome loved her! Hidden in the tall grass he could see her and admire to his heart's content. Listen! what are those words she is singing?

"Dahome, son of the Sun,
I love you, I love you;
Come to me, my own loved one,
For I love you, I love you."

Now, Dahome was not a bit bashful, so when such an inducement was offered him he was not slow in accepting it. To be sure, she was frightened, for, when her ardent lover answered the request, "Come to me, my own loved one," he did it so quickly that she found herself being very tightly hugged, and at first didn't know by whom. After scolding him for his impetuosity and the disarrangement of her hair, she was very willing, at his request, to retire back to the clump of trees and have him tell of his love for her. Unfortunately Dahome's voice was not a musical one, for when he tried to sing his love as she had done, he awakened the mother of the Object, who immediately demanded that her darling "should come into the house this instant," and, furthermore, that she "ought to be ashamed of being in the company of Dahome, the vagrant."

When Dahome aroused himself from the stupor in which he had fallen after the departure of the Object he realised that something desperate must be done to convince his loved one's mother that he was a splendid match for her charming daughter. And so ended his first night's wooing.

After that on every moonlight night, Dahome was to be seen hunting in the vicinity of the Object's hut. One beautiful evening, many moons after the memorable one, he had taken his friend, the javelin, and had ventured forth to procure his supper. It is needless to say that he eventually found himself near the stream, opposite his heart's desire's dwelling. Pausing in the tall grass, he relapsed into deep thought, thoughts of the future. How should he gain the goodwill of the mother? There was the rock on which he struck and stayed. Give her presents? That he could not do, for he had none to give. Become a warrior and gain glory on the field? No; for that was too much of a risk, and Dahome did not inherit his father's warlike spirit. Trouble and danger were things he did not care to look for. Ah, well, time and true love would find a way to overrule the matron's objections. Reflecting thus, Dahome had almost fallen asleep.

Lulled by the music of the brook, and the singing of the insects, a man less fond of the influence of Morpheus than our own vagrant, might have found it difficult to remain awake.

From a certain clump of trees came a soft, purring sound, that Dahome knew very well. As the music increased in volume and tempo, Dahome shook off the languid influence and planned a surprise for his loved one.

Arising, he commenced to pick his way towards the trees where she was singing. Ah! how he would steal up behind her and take her in his strong arms. He pictured to himself how she would start and scream, and try to escape, and then, after a word of love from him, she would stop struggling and, laying her darling little head upon his broad shoulder, whisper words of love.

There she is, reclining on a bank of moss. Her plump, round arms thrown above her head, and looking dreamily at the moon. How Dahome hated that moon, for is there not a man's face there? Who knows but that it is one of the gods trying to steal his darling from him.

Look! her lips move, but no sound reaches him. Her arms untwine from over her head and are raised towards that cursed face. Why, now, wonder after wonder, the lips of that face seem to move and smile! Oh, that the Image would put strength enough in his arm so that he could hurl his javelin through that hated bodiless god. But why not try? Grasping his spear more firmly he prepared to throw.

Stop! listen! There is no wind stirring, yet was not that a distinct rustling of the leaves. Again that sound. It is in the direction of the Object; but no, she is asleep. Soothed by her own song, she had dropped back on her improvised couch, and was now in the land of sweet visions.

But what are those two small spots in that dense blackness of the underbrush? Now the spots grow larger, now smaller, they come nearer, they are approaching the light. Now appears an indistinct form; now more clearly a majestic head, a lithe body, a flowing mane and a restless tail. By the shade of his beloved father—the lion! Now he is in the moonflood. How beautiful, how dangerously beautiful!

Dahome, Dahome, arouse yourself! Think no more of the ethereal god, there's better work for you now. There's a god of the jungle ready to destroy the beloved of your heart. I implore the Image to give you strength, not to reach the moon, but to fight a far more dangerous rival. For, see how the lion licks his red chops! Be careful, Dahome, he is going to kiss your love and you know that his caresses mean death. Don't allow him to embrace her, for when he shall have finished you may see her in the arms of the moon god. Now is the time to get her for yourself. If you kill the lion you may demand her from her stingy old mother by the right of conquest, and then think what a hero you will be in the village? Think of the bags of bright stones that await the man who brings the lion's head to the temple. Think of the crown of flowers that will be placed on your proud head. No more will they call you lazy vagrant.

There, that is right; fix your trusty spear and throw. Throw hard now, for there are no more spears at hand, and the first must kill. See how it glistens and sparkles as it cuts through the moonbeams. It strikes the lion—gods, what a deafening roar! Dahome, Dahome, you did not aim well, he is only wounded. Hide if you can, for he is looking for you. Ah, too late! here he comes. That's it, use your flint knife. Thrust, man, thrust for his heart. Oh, Image, if you've any power at all, use it in protecting this brave young man? See, the lion has borne him down. That's a good manœuvre, Dahome, let him chew that left arm; but use your knife with your right as fast as you can. One, two, three—and every lunge sends the knife up to the hilt in the body of the lion. Good, good! that last stroke reached his heart; for, see! he is still—thank the gods, he is dead. And now, Dahome, you may pull your scratched and torn self together and find that little girl that disappeared in the direction of her hut when the lion first roared.

Come man, get up, leave the embrace of that horrid, bleeding beast—you're a hero now, Dahome. Dahome! Ah, it is no use calling him—he is asleep again. But this time it's not a vagrant's snooze—it's the peaceful sleep of death, awarded to a hero.

G. Osborne.

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The Brain Gymnasium.

On this page, under the title "The Brain Gymnasium," appear each week a series of puzzles calculated to occupy the attention of the competitors with interest and profit to themselves.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the competitor whose attempt we receive giving the correct solutions of all the puzzles. If more than one is absolutely correct the prize of £2 will be given to the first correct attempt dealt with.

If no list of absolutely correct solutions are sent in the first prize will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt is first dealt with showing the fewest mistakes.

Each week we shall award in addition to the above, either ten of our silver plated pencil-cases or ten popular six shilling novels to be distributed amongst the competitors whose attempts are absolutely correct and have failed to win the first prize, or, if no complete lists of correct solutions are received, to those whose attempts show the fewest mistakes.

Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, March 19th, 1900.

No. 58.

My first is a seaman; my first and second a person of irritable temper; and my whole is an Asiatic district.

No. 59.

I am dryness itself; put my tail in place of my head, and I am a drinking vessel; behead me, and I am uncouth; again behead me, add my original tail, and I should be anything.

No. 60.

The first two letters of two European countries, the second two letters of a South American Republic, and the first and third letters of a division of Ireland, when properly arranged, will form the name of a Roman hero.

No. 61.

With a certain number of strokes form a number, and by adding a similar number of strokes, make the number ten times as great. Remove the same number of strokes, and put as many in their place, and leave what would signify a "duffer."

No. 62.

A A E E
E E E E
E E I I
L L L L M N N
N P R R
S S U U
V V Y Y

Re-arrange the letters given here so that two word squares are formed, the connecting word of which signifies "bondage."

No. 63.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Repeat three of the above figures four times and one eight times, and then arrange the twenty-one numbers so that four squares are formed, the total sum of each square being thirty-two.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES

Appearing in No. 581, February 17th.

No. 40. RE-TURN, TURN-ER.

No. 41. HEROINE.

No. 42. REMARK-ABLE.

No. 43.
T i B e r
e Y e
R
d O n
k a N d y

No. 44.
P O S C I C S L C P
C O T T O N O P O L I S
O T O O T I I O I N
L O P P O L N T P T

No. 45.
R A S P
A R E A
S E A S
P A S S A G E
A L O E
G O A L
E E L S

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 34 to 39.

In this week's competition, twenty-eight competitors were absolutely correct. We have again added to the prizes offered (viz., £2 and ten silver plated pencil-cases) and are forwarding to each of the following a postal order for two shillings, together with one of the pencil-cases.

Miss Jenkin, Ebbw Vale; A. Carter, Brixton, S.W.; C. H. Wilkins, Battersea, S.W.; H. Wellard, Tunbridge Wells; Ernest Bloom, Harringay, N.; E. Hutchings, High Holborn, W.C.; Malcolm Spurgin, Peterboro'; J. B. Murless, Shrewsbury; J. Pearson, Hyde, Cheshire; J. Kean, Edinburgh; Miss M. Connell, Hertford; C. A. Young, East Dulwich; J. A. Watts, Balham, S.W.; H. Chadwick, Clerkenwell, E.C.; H. Quinton, Southampton; A. P. Hamilton, Edinburgh; J. McCormick, Dublin; C. H. Poynter, Southampton; W. Crampton, Manchester; Miss J. Bullen, Richmond; H. Cawte, Camberley; Mrs. Moran, Edinburgh; Miss H. Marcus, Blackheath, S.E.; H. Watts, Chelsea, S.W.; Miss Van Praagh, South Hampstead; M. Van Praagh, South Hampstead; F. Culyer, West Norwood; M. Read, West Dulwich, S.E.

SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double " "	1 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page " "	5 0 0
Quarter-page " "	2 10 0
Eighth-page " "	1 5 0
Front page, whole " "	12 10 0
" half	6 5 0

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Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, March **13th**, if intended for the issue on sale March **27th**, and dated March **31th**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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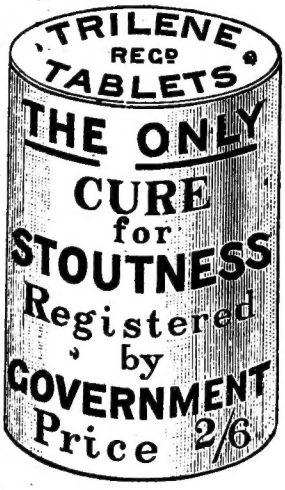
ALL FAT PEOPLE

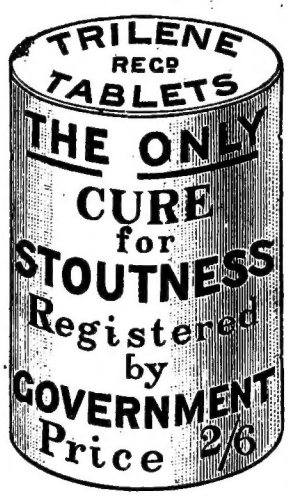
Can be **CURED** by taking

TRILENE TABLETS Regd



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."



Send **2s. 6d.** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION**, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896. 'Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

Miss CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898. "Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lib. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Riseholme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began your Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary."

Mrs. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. McLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to ake more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

Mrs. H. COX, 23 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, M.R.C.V.S., of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. BADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver nr Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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HOW DO YOU SPELL

VELVETEEN?

FIVE LETTERS ONLY.

Don't Forget this when you buy.

EVERY YARD IS STAMPED

L-O-U-I-S.

OROCO SOX

A New Invention to keep the feet warm and dry yet allowing perfect ventilation

18 pairs post free for 1/-

State size required.

A boon for tender & tired feet

OROCO M'F'G. Co.
WIGAN.

WILL SUIT YOU DOWN TO THE GROUND.

SCRIVEN.

ZEBRA

Grate Polish

No Hard Work.

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